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The World Outside: Local TV News Treatment of Imported News

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Presented to the Radio-Television Journalism Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Convention, Washington, DC, August 11, 1995

The World Outside: Local TV News Treatment of Imported News

Abstract

McManus's economic model of inexpensive, passive discovery held true over the journalistic model of active surveillance in smaller markets, where stations not only devoted less time to news than those in larger markets, but a greater proportion of their news content was imported, thus passively discovered. The greater the station's resources, as indicated by market size, the more active the discovery. Some evidence was found that imported news drives out strictly local news in smaller television markets. And although larger market stations devoted higher proportions of their newshole to sensational and human interest news, small market stations imported a greater proportion of sensational news than was originated locally.

The World Outside: Local TV News Treatment of Imported News

During the fall of 1994, viewers in television markets across the country could tune in local newscasts for the latest information about the O.J. Simpson trial. Similarly, local news viewers were appraised of widespread flooding in the Houston, Texas area and received updates on the terrorist bombing of a bus in downtown Tel Aviv. These were among many instances where, by reporting news that occurred outside their coverage areas, stations appeared to have assumed the mantle of network television news' traditional service — a blurring of the distinctions between network and local news.[1]

Lichty and Gomery have questioned the impact of outside sources for news, concluding that satellite feeds are "really important only for the occasional, big, breaking stories, especially sensational crimes and disasters." Even so, they say, local late-night newscasts are heavily dependent on edited network news stories narrated by local anchors. Moreover, to meet the competition of syndicated news services delivered by satellite, the networks increased their own feeds of news material.[2]

About 74% of the stations responding to a 1987 survey by Lacy, Atwater, and Powers subscribed to satellite news networks. Stations in the large markets were more likely to have access to satellite news gathering (SNG) than those in small markets.[3] But this study was conducted when SNG was a relatively young technology. In the ensuing years, many more stations, particularly those located in smaller markets, acquired and extensively use such services.[4]

Despite the proliferation of SNG services, Hess reported that news directors of 102 television stations in markets ranging from among the largest to the smallest in the country said they were not interested in expanding national and international news coverage.[5] Regardless, Cleland and Ostroff observe that having gone to the trouble and expense of acquiring SNG resources, stations are likely to use them, perhaps driving purely "local" news from their broadcasts.[6]

Even with the acknowledged growth in the number of SNG services and their accessibility in all markets, it remains unclear how stations handle them. Do viewers have a different window on the world based on the market in which they happen to reside?

McManus tested an economic model wherein if a station seeks to maximize profit, greater resources will be allocated to passive than to active means of discovery. Minimally active discovery, for instance, was defined as events or information that are learned of without leaving or phoning outside the typical newsroom other than to contact service dispatchers. This form of discovery includes video "feeds" received from outside organizations. McManus found that inexpensive, passive discovery took precedence over the journalistic model of active surveillance. Nevertheless, the greater the station's resources, as indicated by the size of the market, the more active the discovery.[7]

In contrast, Harmon found little difference between small and large-market stations and concluded that small-market stations were no more likely than larger market station news programs to fill their newsholes with prepackaged non-deadline features. Thus, Harmon contended that local TV news decision makers across the country were more alike than they were different.[8]

Carroll, on the other hand, concluded that the higher average time devoted by small market news to prearranged content suggested that news workers were more inclined to allow outside entities to identify what was newsworthy.[9] And in a study of nine Texas stations in three markets Davie and Lee's hypothesis that network or consortium SNG services solidify news values was supported since higher agreement was found among stations for national and world stories than for local and state stories. A relation between market size and content diversity was also found, with the smallest of the markets having the least diversity and the largest having the greatest percentage of news product differentiation.[10]

A similar difference between smaller and larger markets was observed by Bernstein, Lacy, Cassara, and Lau, who determined that stations in larger markets devote a lower percentage of

newshole to local news while giving more attention to national and world events.[11] Carroll also found different emphases on news by stations in medium and small markets, which devoted less time than those in major markets to national and world news. Moreover, major markets were found to devote significantly more time to state and regional news than either medium or small markets. One of the reasons for these distinctions may have been the length of early evening news programs. Stations in the largest markets often broadcast an hour or more of local news whereas 30-minute programs were the norm in medium and, especially, in small markets.[12] Thus, differences could be attributed to program length as much as to any other values manifested by stations in different sized markets.

Consequently, the question of what kind of news reports are being imported to supplement local news remains unresolved. An unanticipated advantage of the Florida News Network satellite consortium that was observed by Cleland and Ostroff was the availability of stories for the lighter "feature" block of local newscasts wherein affiliated stations are able to use stories from other stations to fill the slot. The early-evening local news emphasized local stories since it was followed by the network news, whereas much heavier reliance was placed on SNG stories for the late-evening newscast in an attempt to offer a "fresh" identity for that program.[13]

Several studies have considered whether sensational and human interest stories such as crime, accidents, and violence crowd out public affairs coverage on local television news. Adams concluded that despite criticism to the contrary, local news did not devote an inordinate amount of time to sensational or human interest stories.[14] Likewise, Wulfemeyer found that the stations in the market he analyzed devoted more time to significant issues of the day than to anything else. Moreover, he found that local early-evening newscasts were truly local, with little time devoted to stories that took place outside a 50-mile radius of the stations.[15] Ryu, on the other hand, concluded that public affairs news does not always make the newscast due to pressure on decision-makers to attract the largest audiences possible.[16] In the same vein, a recent replication of Adams' study found that news organizations devoted significantly more time to

sensational/human interest stories in 1992 then they did in 1976.[17] And Carroll found that major market stations devoted significantly greater time to news about crimes, fires, and accidents, which supported his hypothesis that larger market stations devote more attention to stories on controversial issues of unpleasant aspects of community life.[18]

With the contradictory findings of studies cited above, the pattern in local news emphasis based on market size is inconclusive. This study seeks to confirm whether previously-noted patterns in the use of news from outside the television market still exist. Thus, the disparate patterns in news values by stations in various sized markets noted in previous research prompts the following research questions:

RQ_1: Are there differences in television markets' emphasis of news from outside the market?

RQ_2: Are there differences in emphasis of sensational and other kinds of imported news?

RQ_3: Is imported news, most of which is delivered to the stations via satellite, driving out strictly local news?

Therefore, this study sought to more clearly determine whether stations located in larger or smaller markets differ in their treatment of news. Moreover, the analysis attempted to resolve whether disparities noted earlier among small and large television market news programs extend to their treatment of news imported from outside the market, an especially important consideration given the diffusion of satellite delivery systems and the variety of competing syndicated sources of news.

Method

Late evening (10 or 11 p.m.) news broadcasts were analyzed because they receive the highest viewing of any local newscast and because the broadcast by each station occurred during the same post prime-time period, imposing uniform length and program schedule constraints on all

news decision makers. Broadcasts typical of stations across the country, taking into account diversity in geographic area and market size, were analyzed.

The late-evening news programs were 35 minutes in length, unlike early evening news, where stations in the largest markets schedule local news programs that may begin as early as 4:00 p.m. and continue until 7:00 p.m. with only a half-hour break for network news. In contrast, most stations located in small market and many in larger markets typically present two half-hour news broadcasts, scheduled on either side of the network nightly news.

The sample included 117 newscasts on 65 stations in 25 television markets[19] that were affiliated with the ABC, CBS, or NBC television networks. Of these, 41 broadcasts were on 24 stations in 8 major markets (Nielsen Designated Market Areas [DMAs] 1-15); 31 broadcasts were on 6 stations in 6 large markets (DMAs 21-33); 34 broadcasts were by 18 stations in 6 medium sized markets (Nielsen DMAs 51-88); and 11 broadcasts were on 7 stations located in small markets (Nielsen DMAs 111-194).

Broadcasts in each market were videotaped on successive evenings during a two-week period encompassing October 18-20 and October 25-27, 1994. The late-evening local newscast of ABC television network affiliates were recorded on Tuesday, the CBS affiliates' newscasts on Wednesday, and the NBC affiliates' newscasts on Thursday during the first week, with CBS affiliates' recorded on the second Tuesday, followed by NBC affiliates' on Wednesday, and ABC affiliates' news programs on the second Thursday.

The unit of analysis was the news story. Coding was completed by two-member teams that met periodically throughout the process to settle questions about the coding procedure and to resolve conflicts in coding decisions. The results of each coding session were reviewed by the senior author, who referred ambiguities and omissions back to the appropriate coding team for resolution.

The geographic origin of the story was coded according to whether it originated in the city of license, the TV market, the state, within the U.S census region in which the market was located,[20] was a national story originating anywhere in the U.S. outside the station's census region, or was a world story that originated outside the U.S.

The source of the story was coded to identify whether it was local, network, SNG from outside the market, a video news release (VNR), syndicated video material, other outside market video reports, or a studio report on news from outside the market that did not include video tape presentation.

Story topics were coded by following the category system used by Stempel.[21] For purposes of the present analysis, these categories were expanded to include philanthropy and community affairs, religion, and consumer self-help.

An intercoder reliability coefficient of .80 was based on comparisons of decisions by each of the three coding teams on two newscasts coded by other teams.[22] Reliability checks revealed that a lack of familiarity with various municipalities increased errors in coding the geographic origin of stories. Consequently, coding accuracy was improved by using maps of the television markets and by assigning broadcasts to a coding team with at least one member who was acquainted with the geographic area that comprised the television market. The data were entered in a computer database and coding was subsequently reviewed to increase consistency and accuracy. When inconsistencies and omissions were identified, they were resolved by the original coders. Upon completion of coding it was decided that all video reports that originated outside the market would be included in a single category due to the coding teams' difficulty in identifying the specific source of many such reports. Thus, reliability was increased beyond that achieved by the coding teams.

Results

Contrasts in emphasis of imported news confirm that viewers have different windows on the world depending on the status of the market in which they reside. Even though the length of the newscasts on the stations included in this analysis was the same (35 minutes), newshole varied according to market size. Whereas major market stations averaged 14.13 minutes and large markets averaged 13.99 minutes, the newshole for medium market stations was 12.94 minutes, and it was only 11.83 minutes in the smallest markets.

There are also clear differences in the emphasis that stations in medium and smaller markets gave to imported news. First, 45.8% of the newshole in small markets was imported, compared with 40.8% in medium, 34.4% in large markets, and 33.0% of major market stations' newshole. As illustrated in Table 1, there was a progressive decrease from the smallest to the largest markets in the proportion of newshole devoted to state and regional news. Whereas 14.4% of small market stations' news dealt with state and regional news, major markets devoted but 8.6%. Furthermore, both small and medium market stations devoted greater proportions of their newsholes (32.6% and 31.4% respectively) to national and world news compared with much lower proportions of news on stations in large (26.1%) and major markets (28.6%).

Table 1 About Here
Percentage of Newshole Devoted to News
About Geographic Areas

Yet another contrast between the smallest and the larger markets was the difference in the proportion of newshole that was locally originated. Whereas only 53.1% of small market newshole was accounted for by local news, 58.2% of medium, 64.3% of large, and 62.8% of major market newshole pertained to the market. Moreover, the predominance of the news originated by stations in the smallest markets was from their city of license. Stations in the smallest markets devoted 48.6% of their newshole to news about their city of license compared with 33.7% in medium markets, 35.6% in large and 36.7% in major markets. But whereas the

proportions of newshole pertaining to news about the market that came from outside the city of license ranged from 24.5 to 26.1% in the three largest market categories, small market station newscasts devoted a mere 4.5% of their newshole to news about the broader TV market surrounding the city.

Other differences were found among market categories through one-way analysis of variance (see Table 2). No appreciable differences were found for news originating in the city of license, in the market, in the state, or in the region, but there was significantly greater emphasis in medium than in large markets to national news. And stations in small markets gave significantly greater emphasis to national news than those in either large or major markets $F(3, 526) = 4.53$, $p = .004$. Similarly, small market stations devoted significantly greater attention to world news than the stations in large markets $F(3, 235) = 2.20$ $p = .089$.

Table 2 About Here
Geographic Origin of News

Another consideration was the difference in emphasis on stories that originated locally or were imported. Major market stations gave greatest emphasis to locally originated news (see Table 3). The only significant difference in locally originated news, however, was between major and medium markets.

More distinctive differences were found in the emphasis given imported news by smaller and larger markets. Both small and medium market stations devoted significantly more time to imported news — both video and "tell" stories taken from wire service reports $F(3, 995) = 6.73$, $p = .0002$ than large or major market stations.

Table 3 About Here
Sources of Stories

In considering whether imported news drives out local news, we compared the proportions of newshole devoted to imported news with that for locally originated news. Rank order correlation coefficients for proportions of newshole devoted to topics of local and imported news reveal some notable contrasts (see Table 4). Stations in the major markets had the closest priorities for imported and locally originated news $r_o = .69, p < .01$. Large market stations had a similarly strong agreements $r_o = .68, p < .01$. There was a somewhat weaker agreement between priorities placed on locally originated and imported newshole in medium markets $r_o = .61, p < .01$. In contrast, the coefficient of agreement in priority of local and imported news in the smallest markets, albeit significant, was considerably weaker that those in the larger markets $r_o = .50, p < .05$.

Table 4 About Here
Percentage of Newshole
for Local and Imported Stories

There were some notable differences in the topics that were emphasized in imported and locally originated news. Not surprisingly, higher proportions of imported than locally originated news were devoted to war and defense and to diplomacy and foreign relations news in all market categories.

In medium and small markets, the proportion of accident and disaster news from outside the market far surpassed the proportions of such news that was generated locally. In medium markets, stations imported 4.9% of their newshole compared with 3.5% that was originated locally. In small markets, the contrast was even greater, with 6.2% of the newshole that was imported pertained to accidents and disasters compared with less than 1% that was local news. And unlike the larger markets, a greater proportion of crime news was imported into small markets (8.4%) than was originated locally (8.9%).

There was no appreciable difference in the proportions of imported and locally originated major market newshole devoted to human interest news. In contrast, a higher proportion of

human interest news broadcast in large markets originated outside their markets, whereas medium and small market stations originated a greater proportion of the human interest news they broadcast.

Top 15, large, and medium markets devoted a greater proportion of their newsholes to sensational and human interest news, which, for purposes of this study, included the afore-mentioned stories dealing with crime, accidents and disasters, war and defense, human interest, and popular amusements. Total newshole devoted to sensational and human interest news in the top 15 markets was 57.1%. In large markets it was 55.7%, which was similar to the 55.8% in medium markets compared with 47.9% of small market newsholes.

In all but the smallest markets, greater proportions of sensational and human interest news originated in the market. Such locally-originated news accounted for 36.1% of top 15 market newshole compared with 21.0% that was imported. A similar proportion of the newshole was found in large markets, with 22.9% imported and 32.8% originated by the stations. In medium markets, a somewhat greater proportion, 24.8%, was imported, while locally generated sensational and human interest news accounted for 31% of the newshole. In contrast, 27.4% of the small market station newshole was imported and only 20.5% was locally-generated.

There was a clear division between the two smallest and the two largest market categories in how they handled topics of imported stories. As already noted, both small and medium market stations devoted significantly more total time to imported news than stations in large or major markets $F(3, 995) = 6.73$, $p = .0002$.

Table 5 About Here
Topics of Imported Stories

As shown in Table 5, small and medium market stations gave significantly greater emphasis to health and medical news $F(3, 80) = 4.97$, $p = .0033$ and human interest news $F(3, 234) = 4.20$, p

= .0064. Moreover, small market stations also gave significantly more emphasis to war and defense news $F(3, 51) = 1.88$, $p = .144$ than stations in the larger markets.

Discussion

The label "local news" is somewhat of a misnomer since stations in all markets fleshed out their news programs with imported news. Research Question 1 asked whether there were differences in emphasis of imported news among televison markets. We found that the smaller the market, the greater the proclivity of stations to repackage news from other sources, relying heavily on video versions of the newspaper wire services. Jacobs observed that "For a small station with a meager budget, network services can be a godsend, providing the affiliate's management takes advantage of the windfall to concentrate money and personnel on local news coverage. However, many stations are using the material instead to produce broader newscasts...."[23]

As we found, smaller market station news programs may have been broadened, but local news was not enhanced as a result. The typical small market station is located in a modest size city that accounts for the greatest concentration of the population in the market. That these stations do far less reporting on local news occurring outside their city of license does not suggest that little is happening outside that municipality, but that limited resources and less competition for viewers keeps reporters close to home.

McManus's economic model[24] is upheld here, wherein inexpensive, passive discovery held sway over the journalistic model of active surveillance in smaller markets. As defined in this study, passive discovery was manifest as imported news. The greater the station's resources, as indicated by market size, the more active the discovery. This is reflected in the size of the newshole, the proportion of locally originated news, and the level of agreement on the proportions of newshole devoted to locally-generated and imported news topics.

Our second research question asked whether there were differences in emphasis on sensational and other kinds of imported news. Similar to Carroll,[25] we found that the largest markets devoted higher proportions of their newshole to sensational and human interest news. Even so, small markets stations imported greater proportions of sensational news than those in larger markets. Moreover, the proportion of sensational news they imported was greater than the proportion they originated locally. It was as if a lack of local sensationalistic news compelled decision-makers to import enough to give their viewers a sufficient dose.

RQ_3 asked whether imported news is driving out strictly local news. We found some evidence of this in smaller television markets. Although virtually all network affiliated television stations use SNG material in their local newscasts, small and medium market stations imported significantly more news than stations in large and major markets. Moreover, the average length of outside video reports broadcast on stations in the top 15 markets was 34.6 seconds and in large markets it was 33.7 seconds, compared to 43.4 seconds on stations in medium markets and 45.6 seconds in the smallest markets.

Furthermore, rank order correlation coefficients indicate that the proportions of time devoted to topics of imported news in large markets was more in line with the proportion of time they devoted to locally originated news. There was much lower agreement in small markets between the proportion of newshole given to imported and locally originated topics. Thus, smaller market stations appeared to be less particular in supplanting local news with imported news than those in larger markets. One could criticize larger market stations for devoting too much time to sensational topics, perhaps, but news originated locally by stations in the larger markets on those topics was supplemented, not overshadowed, by imported news.

Cleland and Ostroff concluded that stations affiliated with the Florida news consortium may have felt that stories filed by their own reporters would conform to their philosophy and style of news gathering whereas the various stations contributing stories from the consortium would differ.[26] So our finding of significantly lower use of imported news by the largest market

stations appears to be a reflection of the greater degree of selectivity exercised in those markets. It may also reflect the more competitive nature of the larger markets, wherein the image of the station as an identity for viewers is more carefully controlled than it may be in less competitive smaller markets.

End Notes

[1]See Raymond L. Carroll, "Blurring Distinctions: Network and Local News," in *The Future of News: Television, Newspapers, Wire Services, Newsmagazines*, ed. Phillip S. Cook, Douglas Gomery, and Lawrence W. Lichty. (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1992), 45-51.

[2]Lawrence W. Lichty and Douglas Gomery, "More is Less," in *The Future of News*, 11-16.

[3]Stephen Lacy, Tony Atwater, and Angela Powers, "Use of Satellite Technology in Local Television News," *Journalism Quarterly* 65 (Winter 1988): 925-929, 966.

[4]See, for instance, Rob Puglisi, "Satellite News Feeds: Many New Sources," *RTNDA Communicator*, November 1988, 10-17; Rob Puglisi, "Feeding the News Machine, *RTNDA Communicator*, May, 1991, 10-11; and Jerry Jacobs, *Changing Channels: Issues and Realities in Television News*. (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Co., 1990).

[5]Stephen Hess, "Let's Go to the Tapes!" *RTNDA Communicator*, April 1991, 37-38.

[6]Gladys L. Cleland and David H. Ostroff, "Satellite News Gathering and News Department Operations," *Journalism Quarterly* 65 (Winter 1988): 946-951.

[7]John McManus, "How Local Television Learns What Is News," *Journalism Quarterly* 67 (Winter 1990): 672-683.

[8]Mark D. Harmon, "Market Size and Local Television News Judgment," *Journal of Media Economics* 2 (Spring 1989): 15-29.

[9]Raymond L. Carroll, "Market Size and TV News Values," *Journalism Quarterly* 66 (Spring 1989): 49-56.

[10]William R. Davie and Jung-Sook Lee, "Television News Technology: Do More Sources Mean Less Diversity?" *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 37 (Fall 1993): 453-464.

[11]James M. Bernstein, Stephen Lacy, Catherine Cassara, and Tuen-yu Lau, "Geographic Coverage by Local Television News," *Journalism Quarterly* 67 (Winter 1990): 663-671.

[12]Carroll, "Market Size and TV News Values."

[13]Cleland and Ostroff, "Satellite news Gathering."

[14]William C. Adams. "Local Public Affairs Content of TV News," *Journalism Quarterly* 55 (Winter 1978): 690-695.

[15]K. Tim Wulfemeyer, "A Content Analysis of Local Television Newscasts: Answering the Critics," *Journal of Broadcasting* 26 (Winter 1982): 481-486.

[16]Jung S. Ryu, "Public Affairs and Sensationalism in Local TV News Programs," *Journalism Quarterly* 59 (Spring 1982): 74-78, 137.

[17]Karen L. Slattery and Ernest A. Hakanen, "Sensationalism Versus Public Affairs Content of Local TV News: Pennsylvania Revisited," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 38 (Spring 1994): 205-216.

[18]Carroll, "Market Size and TV News Values."

[19]Markets included New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Washington DC, Dallas, Atlanta, Cleveland, Tampa-St. Petersburg, Denver, Orlando, Hartford-Springfield, Indianapolis, Raleigh-Durham, Nashville, Birmingham, Albany, Mobile-Pensacola, Rochester, NY, Tuscon, Davenport, IA-Rock Island-Moline, IL, Montgomery, AL, Gainesville, FL, Panama City, FL, Tuscaloosa, AL, and Lafayette, IN.

[20]United States Department of Commerce, *1990 Census of Population and Housing Guide.* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990).

[21]Guido H. Stempel III, "Topic and Story Choice of Five Network Newscasts," *Journalism Quarterly* 65 (Fall 1988): 750-752.

[22]Ole R. Holsti, *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities.* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1969), 137-140.

[23]Jacobs, *Changing Channels*, 11.

[24]McManus, "How Local Television Learns What Is News."

[25]Carroll, "Market Size and TV News Values."

[26]Cleland and Ostroff, "Satellite News Gathering," 950.

Table 1

Percentage of Newshole Devoted to News About Geographic Areas

	Television Market				
	Major	Large	Medium	Small	All Markets
City of License	36.7%	35.6%	33.7%	48.6%	36.6%
TV Market	26.1	28.7	24.5	4.5	24.6
State and Region	8.6	9.6	10.4	14.4	9.8
National and World	28.6	26.1	31.4	32.6	29.0
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Minutes	578.3	433.5	438.9	129.0	1579.7

Table 2

Average Length of News by Geographic Origin

	Television Market				
	Major	Large	Medium	Small	All Markets
City of License	72.28	61.38	62.22	72.33	66.31
TV Market	62.03	66.08	62.96	43.25	63.51
State News	41.26	42.47	34.11	34.60	38.38
Regional News	37.38	34.42	58.13	25.33	41.44
National	37.43^{a}	32.18^{Bb}	41.42^{b}	54.41^{aB}	37.95
World	30.19	25.39^{b}	35.11	42.82^{b}	31.12
Total	50.89	46.97	50.20	53.86	49.79

Note: Common superscripts indicate a significant difference based on one-way analysis of variance in each category. Lowercase superscripts indicate differences at $p < .05$. Uppercase superscripts indicate differences at $p < .01$.

Table 3

Average Length of News by Source of Stories

	Television Market				
	Major	Large	Medium	Small	All Markets
Locally Originated	71.97[a]	64.78	61.60[a]	67.69	66.63
Imported Video Stories	34.64[A]	33.67[B]	43.42[AB]	45.63[aB]	37.63
Imported: No Video	18.88[A]	18.24[Bb]	22.39[b]	27.64[AB]	20.30
Imported (All Stories)	32.99[A]	31.00[B]	39.98[AB]	43.22[AB]	34.96
Total	50.89	46.97	50.20	53.86	49.79

Note: Common superscripts indicate a significant difference based on one-way analysis of variance in each category. Lowercase superscripts indicate differences at $p < .05$. Uppercase superscripts indicate differences at $p < .01$.

Table 4
Percentage of Newshole for Local and Imported Stories

	Top 15		Large		Medium		Small		All Markets	
	Imported	Local	Importe d	Local	Importe d	Local	Importe d	Local	Importe d	Local
Crime, Courts	7.5	20.5	9.0	20.7	10.9	15.7	8.4	8.0	8.9	18.2
Accidents, Disasters	5.6	7.1	4.9	4.7	4.9	3.5	6.2	0.6	5.3	4.9
War, Defense	1.7	0.3	1.3	0.9	1.6	0.1	5.3	0.7	1.9	0.4
Human Interest	5.8	5.9	7.4	5.2	6.8	9.3	6.4	8.3	6.6	6.8
Pop Amusements	0.4	2.3	0.3	1.3	0.6	2.4	1.1	2.9	0.5	2.1
Politics, Government	3.6	13.1	2.9	13.9	4.2	9.8	3.3	8.5	3.6	12.0
Diplomacy, For Rel	4.0	0.7	2.8	0.2	3.5	0.3	4.9	0.9	3.6	0.4
Economy	0.3	3.3	0.3	2.1	1.9	4.8	1.6	3.9	0.9	3.5
Transportation	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.1	1.4	0.7	--	0.2	0.7
Pub. Moral Problems	1.3	5.1	1.3	9.5	0.8	7.1	0.6	7.7	1.1	7.1
Science, Invention	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.7	--	0.4	--	0.3	0.3
Health , Welfare	2.3	4.4	3.4	3.4	4.5	1.8	5.0	3.6	3.4	3.3
Philantrophy	0.1	0.6	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.9	--	0.3	0.1	0.5
Consumer Self Help	0.2	0.5	--	1.5	--	0.1	1.9	1.4	0.2	0.7
Education/The Arts	--	1.6	--	1.1	--	1.9	--	7.1	--	2.0
Religion	--	0.7	--	0.1	--	--	--	--	--	0.3
Total	33.0	67.0	34.4	65.6	40.8	59.2	45.8	54.2	36.6	63.4
Grand Total	100.0%		100.0%		100.0%		100.0%		100.0%	
Minutes	578.3		433.5		438.9		129.0		1579.7	
Rank Order Correlations	.69 ($p < .01$)		.68 ($p < .01$)		.61 ($p < .01$)		.50 ($p < .05$)		.64 ($p < .01$)	

Note. Locally originated news includes some news about the state, region or the nation that was originated by the station.

Table 5

Average Length of Imported News Topics

	Television Market				
	Major	Large	Medium	Small	All Markets
Crime & Courts	38.85	37.49	43.33	40.44	39.96
Human Interest	22.83^{Aa}	23.67^{b}	30.88^{Ab}	35.14^{ab}	25.74
Politics & Government	54.46	42.39	50.18	36.43	48.30
Accidents & Disasters	29.06	29.63	34.21	40.08	31.26
Public Moral Problems	41.91	33.40	24.17	25.00	36.21
War & Defense	30.30	21.75^{b}	37.83	51.13^{b}	32.35
Diplomacy/Foreign Rel	42.46	43.47	48.00	37.80	43.42
Economic Activity	18.67	18.00	34.86	30.50	28.00
Transportation	25.00^{a}	23.75^{B}	24.00^{c}	55.00^{aBc}	28.43
Science & Invention	18.00	25.00	92.50	35.00	48.00
Health & Medical	29.52^{Aa}	34.12^{aB}	45.96^{ac}	77.00^{ABc}	38.86
Popular Amusements	21.43^{Aa}	29.00^{B}	33.80^{aC}	85.00^{ABC}	30.69
Philanthropy	20.00	14.00	105.00	--	46.33
Consumer Self-Help	41.50	--	--	150.00	77.67
Total	32.49^{A}	31.00^{B}	39.98^{AB}	43.22^{AB}	34.96

Note: Common superscripts indicate a significant difference based on one-way analysis of variance in each category. Lowercase superscripts indicate differences at $p < .05$. Uppercase superscripts indicate differences at $p < .01$.

CHANGES IN LOCAL TV NEWS CONTENT: CHECKING THE CRITICS

ABSTRACT--75 WORDS

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Paper presented to the Radio-Television Journalism Division, AEJMC, Aug. 11, 1995

The author performs a content analysis of 896 news stories from 60 newscasts nationwide. The author finds some criticisms of local TV news are valid. Sensationalism is expanding, mostly at the expense of economic reporting. Fox affiliates are leading the way to the police beat. More sound bites and shorter ones emerge as markers of larger market stations. More local stories and more locally-shot material are associated with rank, rating, and share success.

CHANGES IN LOCAL TV NEWS CONTENT: Checking the Critics

Television critics in trade press articles recently have been heaping abuse on U.S. local television news. The critics say local TV news in recent years has grown superficial and sensational, pre-occupied with pacing personality, and shocking video. The claims frequently amount to little more than "argument by anecdote," accounts of individual news stories either overplayed (crime, violence, disasters) or underplayed (public affairs). Another variation is to point to a particular news station and its curious news choices.

These critical analyses point to various causes: the pressure for ratings, the use of consultants, the emphasis on appearance over substance, or the subtle influence of tabloid programs (*A Current Affair, American Agenda, Hard Copy, Inside Edition,* etc.) shifting news judgment.

Frequently the critics assert local television news never was particularly good, and simply has grown worse. Such claims are ubiquitous but are they accurate? Few researchers have talked the massive task of sampling the content of the more than 200 TV markets in the U.S.

This study is a follow-up to one such effort (Harmon, 1988), an analysis of newscasts from 1986 and 1987 randomly selected from the files of a leading news consultant, Audience Research and Development (ARD). This study will examine 1992-93 newscasts, again using ARD files, to create a profile of U.S. local TV news content and note any changes in the interim. The ARD samples, containing both clients and competitors of clients, represent a good cross-section of local TV newscasts by region, network affiliation, market size, and early v. late and weekday v. weekend newscasts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Levine (1993) created one of the laundry list articles about abuses in local TV news (and threw in a few network examples for good measure). The article listed staged stories, a dog fight in Colorado, underage beer drinking in Minnesota; an overstated story, a much-hyped New York City shark alert that belatedly mentions the large sharks feed only on plants and very small animals; and dubious "investigative" reports on topless maid services, underwear, and the stimulative merits of pornographic videos.

American Journalism Review (Rieder, 1993) devoted ten pages of a cover story to ten prominent media analysts to answer the question "Why Is Local TV News So Bad?" Some highlights of the answers:

Howard Rosenberg, TV critic for the Los Angeles Times: "Local news--in Los Angeles, at least--is mostly an extension of the entertainment programs that surround it. If I want nightly triple features of violence--endless coverage of grisly, blood-spattered offenses that feeds our paranoia about crime--I know where to find it. Local news." He also complained that stations "gratuitously go live solely to impress viewers."

David Bartlett, president of the Radio-Television News Directors Association: "Even if coverage of crime and violence could be shown to encourage more of the same, and there is no credible evidence that it does, would the public really prefer to be kept in the dark? . . . Local television news is, in fact, among our society's most democratic institutions. Millions of viewers vote their preferences every night."

Phyllis Kaniss, assistant dean, Annenberg School for Communications, University of Pennsylvania: "It has become the dirty little secret of local television news that certain kinds of stories--those concerning politics and government--are being quietly edged out of newscast lineups." Her tally of the 1991 Philadelphia mayor's race found the daily total early/late evening coverage for each station ran from 26 seconds to a little over a minute; three out of every four stories dealing with horserace or personal attacks instead of issues.

Jamie Malanowski, senior features editor for Us magazine: "It's only when the world stops cooperating and ceases to deliver attention-getting material that local news feels obliged to fall back into reporting the tiresome, complicated, and often not very illuminating activities of local officials and neighborhood residents, spiced up by thinly imagined features, like canned interviews with actors or the theatricalized adventures of overheated consumer protectors."

Patricia Stevens, first female TV news director in the U.S., says the talented folks can't use their talent in the "rush for 15-second voice

overs and cosmetic live shots." Local TV newscasts, she argues, take their clues from tabloids because many reporters don't have a clue how to investigate a story--and yet must fill more air time with fewer people.

Paul Steinle, former president of United Press International and the Financial News Network: "Certain formats and technologies have colluded to undercut quality. 'Live at Five,' pioneered by WNBC in the 1980s in New York City, replaced traditional news topics with a stream of celebrity interviews and lifestyle features, blurring the concept of local news content."

Howard Kurtz, Washington Post media reporter, says the "Hard Copy" approach to news has now spread to local stations across the country, the latest quick fix for anemic ratings.

Kurtz (1993) also conducted a five-day (weekday) sampling of June 1993 late evening newscasts from five stations known to have been stressing tabloid news. He defined and coded tabloid as "stories involving crime, sex, disasters, or public fears." The tally:

	WSVN Miami	WWOR N.Y.	KCBS L.A.	WBBM Chicago	WRC Wash., D.C.
Percent of tabloid stories	74	60	58	51	46
Most consecutive tabloid stories at top of broadcast	22	7	4	5	6
Stories involving murder, shooting, kidnapping or suicide	28	11	15	6	16
Stories involving disasters, accidents, illness or product tampering	39	20	19	15	5

Bash (1993) collected criticism that the growth of live coverage was leading to distorted news values and factual errors stemming largely from crime coverage. Marcy Burdick, chairwoman of the Radio and Television News Directors Association admits "live" can distort story value. She said, "The times I have been disappointed are when a station shows up at a

scene and circumstances dictate that it is not a lead story, but they don't have the courage to abandon the live shot." Smith (1984) found a similar ambivalence about expanded live capacity, microwave and satellite, in a survey of television news directors.

Certainly one should expect more live remotes than the 2.2 percent Harmon (1988) reported in his 1986-87 national content analysis. Other analyses in the late 1980s echoed that surprisingly low number. A survey by Lacy et. al. (1988) found that three out of every four commercial stations had satellite downlinks (useful for news feeds), but only half had their own satellite news gathering equipment. Bernstein et. al. found only 40 stories out of 3,029 analyzed in his sample involved satellite news gathering gear. The number of live remotes should increase in the 1990s as stations add live satellite capacity to microwave links. Big stories such as the Gulf War and the L.A. riots may be prompting such a change. Carson (1992) is typical of the trade press describing routine use of helicopter live remotes in telling the story of the riots.

One of the most thorough critical analyses of local TV news came in Jacob's book Changing Channels. Jacobs explains the "Local, Local" concept of stressing local news gathering while at the same time extending one's reach, even to the point of sending one's news anchors to national and international events. He reviews the role of consultants in stressing fast-paced visuals. He notes the importance of satellite technology as a new toy to be used extensively to justify its expense.

Not all the criticisms of local TV news can be answered easily or directly through content analysis. However, if these observations, suggestions, and inferences are correct, then the following hypotheses should prove to be true when one compares the **1992-93 newscasts** to the 1986-87:

H_1 More visual stories; fewer non-visual (reader) stories;

H_2 Higher story count; shorter story lengths;

H_3 More violent crime, disaster/accident and fewer government stories;

H_4 More local stories, fewer national/international stories;

H_5 More live shots

The journalism trade press certainly also has been asserting that the push for ratings success drives local television news toward fast-paced newscasts dominated by the sensational and the visual. If these assertions are correct, then highly-rated newscasts should be leading the way in the above-noted trends. Thus, we can look at the same hypotheses using rank within the market, newscast rating, and newscast share. **Highly rated newscasts** (measured by rank, rating, and share) should be more likely than lowly ranked newscasts to have:

H_6 More visual stories; fewer non-visual (reader) stories;

H_7 Shorter story lengths;

H_8 More violent crime, disaster/accident stories;

H_9 More local stories, fewer national/international stories;

H_{10} More live shots

Asserting a claim regarding market size is a bit more problematic. Certainly the trade press articles would lead one to believe that large market newsrooms are leading the way in the hypothesized trends. However, that may be a function of leading newspapers with media critics being located in large markets. Academic investigations of market-driven differences in local TV news content have led to mixed results.

Carroll (1989) found that major market stations place more emphasis than smaller stations on fire, crimes, and accidents, but also do more local government and politics stories. That may lead one to think that large-market stations, compared to smaller ones, are doing more local stories. However, Bernstein et. al. analyzed ten days of newscasts in three markets (six Michigan, eight Oregon stations). They found large-market stations devoted less time to local news than smaller market stations, but all stations they found to be straying from localism toward more international/national stories. This may be a function of "news hole" expanding beyond local news gathering resources; producers might be tempted to "fill" with stories off satellite news feeds. This point fits nicely with the McManus (1989) finding that few stations do much of any "high initiative" stories, though he notes large market stations do a little of the

high initiative stories, compared to almost none for medium and small markets.

Atwater (1984) found that larger markets offered more "product differentiation" than smaller market, as measured by different stories. He conceded, however, this difference is expressed mostly in the soft news stories toward the end of the newscast. Harmon (1989) countered that individual stories may differ slightly (health feature on heart disease v. health feature on AIDS) especially in larger markets with bigger "news holes, "but the overall mix of story forms and topics remained remarkably stable across all market sizes in his 1986-87 national sampling of newscasts. A. Powers (1988), in turn, argues for a growing "product differentiation" based on the growing number and form of news programs in each market. Certainly the growth of independent and Fox affiliate newscasts (most in large markets) give reason to re-examine the question. Therefore, we should examine if **large market newscasts** more likely than small markets newscasts to have:

H_{11} More visual stories; fewer non-visual (reader) stories;

H_{12} Shorter story lengths;

H_{13} More violent crime, disaster/accident stories;

H_{14} More local stories, fewer national/international stories;

H_{15} More live shots

Furthermore, those same trends should be evident when one compares **Fox and Independent newscasts** to the traditional affiliates: The Fox and Independent newscasts should have:

H_{16} More visual stories; fewer non-visual (reader) stories;

H_{17} Shorter story lengths;

H_{18} More violent crime, disaster/accident stories;

H_{19} More local stories, fewer national/international stories;

H_{20} More live shots

If the "filling or killing" time conclusion is correct, then one also should expect differences comparing hour-long to half-hour newscasts. Specifically, the **hour newscasts** should have:

H_{21} longer packages

H_{22} More national/international stories, fewer local;

H_{23} More satellite feed material

METHODS

These hypotheses will be tested using a random sample of 50 local television newscasts dubbed from the files of Audience Research and Development, a leading television news consulting firm, plus an additional ten newscasts taped off the air (KTVT, Dallas; WWOR, N.Y.; WGN, Chicago; KAMC, Lubbock; WWCP, Johnstown; WTAE, Pittsburgh; WTAJ, Altoona; WCMH, Columbus; WUAB, Cleveland; and WCPO, Cincinnati).

The 60 sampled newscasts were from 1992 and the first five months of 1993. It included both ARD clients and competitors of clients. The researcher traveled to Dallas to dub from the ARD files, randomly selecting within certain categories to assure the sample was stratified by: network affiliation, market size, weekday v. weekend newscasts, early v. late newscasts, ARD clients and non-clients. The resulting sample is described in Appendix A. The researcher also kept track of newscast rank in its time slot (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc.), rating, share, and HUT (households using television at the time of the broadcast) as reflected in the ratings book immediately preceding the newscast. The researcher, at press time, was unable to get ratings data for three of the newscasts

The individual news story was the unit of analysis. The 896 stories in the sample were coded by: station, city, month, year, market rank, early v. late newscast (early before 8 p.m. local time, late after that time), half or hour long newscast, ARD client or not, deadline (occurring within the past 24 hours or previewing within the next 24 hours) or non-deadline, network affiliation, newscast rank, rating, share, and HUT level.

The stories also were coded by region, news block, total running time in seconds, race and gender of anchor and reporter (when a "package" story), form (reader, voice-over, package, live remote, etc.), location of story, apparent source of video, plus the presence or absence of: natural sound, a reporter stand-up, or that reporter stooping or turning, handling and object or pointing. Other categories kept track of: number of first

person (I, we, our) and second person (you) references, the principal actor, story topic, the number and length of sound bites and whether from knowns (elected or appointed officials or celebrities) or unknowns. The coding sheet is Appendix B.

The researcher served as principal coder, assisted by two graduate students. Most of the codings (story time, story form, station, gender of anchor, time of sound bite, etc.) were prima facie observations. A set of coding guidelines, Appendix C, helped with analysis. Volunteer graduate and undergraduate students assisted the principal coder in a minor portion of data entry. The principal coder also checked for data entry errors or omissions. The resulting data were analyzed using the Statview statistical program.

FINDINGS

If sensationalism is defined as crime and disaster/accident stories, then local TV news was more sensational in 1992-93 compared to 1986-87, specifically 35.714% of stories compared to 29.135%. However, this expansion of sensational stories did not, as predicted, come at the expense of politics and government stories which actually increased. Instead, economic stories took the biggest dip from 1986-87 to 1992-93, dropping from 13.21% to 8.482%. Local TV also had more national and international stories, 35.379% to 32.5[illegible]%, and local TV news used more live remotes, 5.246% of stories compared to 2.222%. Thus, hypotheses three, four, and five generally were supported (Table 1). However, the percentage of visual stories did not differ substantially between time periods 80.022% in 1992-93 compared to 79.75% in 1986-87. The story count did not vary all that much, an average of 14.9 in 1992-93, compared to 13.9 in 1986-87, almost all attributed to slightly more hour newscasts in the more recent sample. Thus, hypotheses one and two were not supported.

Higher newscast rank in the market (eg. 1st, 2nd) correlated with more local stories (Table 2), more live remotes (Table 3) and more initiative--locally shot video instead of satellite feeds , readers, file video, or paid services such as movie reviews and syndicated health reporters like Dr. Red Duke (Table 4). Higher ratings also correlated with proportionally more local stories and stories with higher initiative (Tables 5 and 6). Higher share of viewing also correlated with more local stories and more initiative (Tables 7 and 8). Thus, hypotheses six, seven, and

eight were not supported, but hypotheses nine and ten were supported at statistically significant levels. Statistical significance also was strong for "initiative," as defined earlier, as one marker separating newscast ratings successes from newscast ratings failures.

Large markets (New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, etc.) did differ from smaller markets (Lubbock, Terre Haute, Paducah, etc.) in two areas: fewer visual stories in the larger markets--contrary to prediction--and more sensational stories (Tables 9 and 10). Thus, the exact opposite of hypothesis eleven proved to be true. Large market stations actually did more non-visual stories compared to smaller markets. Large and small markets did not differ on story lengths or use of live remotes. Thus, hypotheses twelve and fifteen did not prove to be true. The data showed some tendency toward more local stories in larger markets, but at levels just shy of a .05 standard of statistical significance for hypothesis fourteen. Hypothesis eleven, predicting more sensational stories in larger markets, achieved statistical significance in the expected direction.

Market size or rank also connected at statistically significant levels with sound bites in two ways. As market rank increased (moving from larger to smaller markets), the number of bites went down and the length of the bites went up (Tables 11 and 12). Looking at the results another way, as one moves to larger markets one sees more sound bites of shorter length.

Regarding network affiliation, Fox stations outpaced other affiliates in sensational stories (Table 13), partially supporting hypothesis eighteen. Independent stations, however, generally did not engage in as much sensationalism. Independents stations, perhaps reflecting a larger news hole to be filled with relatively scant resources, did more national/international stories than the network affiliates (Table 14), partially supporting hypothesis nineteen. It is also true that independents sometimes are picked up and distributed to distant cable viewers, making the greater national/international focus reasonable. ABC affiliates were significantly higher than others by doing more live remotes. NBC affiliates and Independent stations also used more low initiative stories. NBC stations also had longer sound bites (Tables 15, 16, 17). Hypotheses 16, 17, and 20--predicting more visuals, shoter stories, and more live remotes for the Fox and Independent stations--were not reflected in the data.

Hour newscasts, compared to half-hour newscasts, had longer stories overall (Table 18) and longer packages (Table 19), and fewer local stories (Table 20). This lends some support to the "killing time" observation and

supports hypotheses 21 and 22. The expectation in hypothesis 23, greater use of low initiative stories, did not achieve statistical significance.

DISCUSSION

This research generally clarifies and confirms some of the criticisms of local television news. The data indicate more sensational stories, with Fox affiliates leading the way. As these enter newscast rundowns, however, the big losers are not political stories but economic ones. The use of live satellite remotes is up. However, passive news process (reliance on satellite feeds, file video, and paid services instead of field news gathering) can be detected, and grows more substantial as one goes into smaller markets, or watches the product of lower-rated stations, independent stations and/or hour newscasts.

The conflicting findings over "product differentiation" or market-based differences can only be answered by splitting some fine hairs. Local TV news in 1986-87 was a remarkably uniform product. It still is so if one looks at form, topics, or location. However, some subtle but significant differences can be found. More local stories and more locally shot material are the markers of stations beating the competition. More and shorter sound bites tend to be associated with large-market stations. The new Fox affiliates are pushing the police beat: heavy on voice-overs and violent crime stories. Hour long newscasts show some evidence of "news hole" effect on content. It appears producers are letting stories go longer in this format, plus using national and international stories to help fill the remaining time.

Several logical avenues for additional research on this topic are evident. If sound bite size is a "marker" of a large market, could there be others like shot composition or use of natural sound or ease of word choice? A case study could explore news product differentiation in a market with a new Fox affiliate. Experimental research could address whether the items noted here as associated with ratings success have some sort of causal link to audience approval. Generalizations about local television news are difficult, but national content analyses should continue simply because of the clues they provide to this significant national news source and how it is evolving.

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APPENDIX A: THE SAMPLE

60 Newscasts
896 News Stories

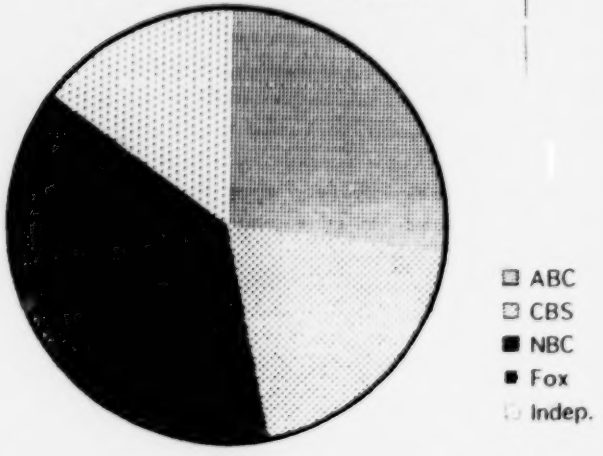
X_1: Early/Late

Element:	Count:
Early	29
Late	31

X_1: Region

Bar:	Element:	Count:	Percent:
1	New England	4	6.667%
2	Mid-Atlantic	8	13.333%
3	Great Lakes	11	18.333%
4	S. East	12	20%
5	Tx-Ok-La-Ark	6	10%
6	Plains	5	8.333%
7	Rockies	5	8.333%
8	Pacific	9	15%

Pie Chart of X_1: Network



X_1: Half/Hour

Element:	Count:	Percent:
Half	42	70%
Hour	18	30%

X_1: Weekday/Weekend

Element:	Count:	Percent:
End	17	28.333%
Day	43	71.667%

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX B

STORY CODING SHEET Station_____City_____ Mo.____ Yr.___Mkt. Rank_____

(early/late) (weekday/end) (half or hour) (ARD/Not) (Deadline/Non-deadline)

(ABC/CBS/NBC/Fox/Indep) Newscast Rank___Rating____ Share___HUT___

Region: New England/Mid-Atl./G. Lakes/S. East/Tx-Ark-Ok-La/Plains/Rockies/ Pacific

---

Slug:_____

Position: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23,

News "Block": 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th **Time:**_____ seconds

Anchor read by: male/female white/black/hispanic/asian/other

If pkg, reporter: male/female white/black/hispanic/asian/unknown/NA

Form: 0) Reader 1) VO, 2) VO/SOT, 3) reporter package,

4) anchor pkg., 5) Live remote w/o video, 6) Live remote w/video,

7) Live on set/newsroom w/o video, 8) Live on set/newsroom w/video,

9) Other_____ **check if:** ___ box graphic ____full page cg

Location: 0) city, 1) metro, 2) ADI, 3) state, 4) region, 5) natl, 6) intl

Apparent video source: 0) local shot, 1) file, 2) net or sat feed, 3)paid service,

4) mix of local and file, 5) mix of file and net/sat, 6) mix of local and net/sat,

7) mix of local & file & net/sat 8) Other 9) Not applicable

Presence or absence: ___ stand-up ___stoop/turn ____point

___handle object ____natural sound (N/A)

Person: ____ # 1st person (I, we) references _____#2nd person (you) ref.

Public/Private:

0) Executive, 1) Police/Fire/EMS 2) Legislative 3) Courts

4) Military 5) Religious groups 6) Entertainment 7) Businesses

8) Union/workers 9) Non-Profit/Charities 10) Consumer 11) Other: _____

Special Topics:

0) Violent Crime 1) Non-violent crime 2) Disater/Accident

3) Health/Medicine 4) Education 5) Economics

6) Politics/Govt. 7) Personality Profile 8) Sports in news block

9) Weather in news block 10) Environment 11) Other: _____

Bites:

1) Known/Unknown _____seconds N/A 5) Known/Unknown_____seconds N/A

2) Known/Unknown _____seconds N/A 6) Known/Unknown_____seconds N/A

3) Known/Unknown _____seconds N/A 7) Known/Unknown_____seconds N/A

4) Known/Unknown _____seconds N/A 8) Known/Unknown_____seconds N/A

APPENDIX C
A GUIDE TO THE CODING SHEET, NEWSCAST CODING, AND CATEGORIES

DEADLINE = an event, action, or statement occurring within the past 24 hours, or planned for the next 24 hours.
NON-DEADLINE = not within the last or next 24 hours.

SLUG: a few words to describe the story in question
POSITION: 1st story = 1, 2nd story = 2, etc.

NEWS BLOCK:. 1st (top), 2nd (after 1st commercial break), etc.

TIME, ANCHOR READ, IF PKG.... --- all self-explanatory

FORM: reader-- no video, just anchor speaking
VO -- voice over, anchor reads, video shown
VO/SOT -- voice over followed by a sound bite
reporter package -- complete field report on videotape
anchor package -- field report (several bites and narration bridges) narrated on tape by anchor (rare--if only one bite, it's a VO/SOT)
live remote, newsroom -- all self-explanatory
Box graphic -- check if applies,
Full page graphic --check if applies

LOCATION --city, inside city limits; metro -- home county
--ADI, county serviced by signal (nearby) but not metro
--state, within state, but not metro or ADI or city
--regional, adjacent state
--national -- U.S., not within state or adjacent state
--international -- all other countries
(if unsure, note name of location for later map check)

APPARENT VIDEO SOURCE -- as described

PRESENCE OR ABSENCE -- check if present, applies only to reporter field packages or anchor packages, except for natural sound which can be check if appearing in any story with video.
PERSON: Note how many times we hear 1st or 2nd person references in any news story.
PUBLIC/PRIVATE: Identify the principal actor in the story.
SPECIAL TOPICS: Pick the one that best describes. Use "other" only if story has no connection to any noted topic.
BITES: Mark if Known (elected or appointed official or celebrity) or Unknown (man-on-street, witness to event) and note number of seconds.

TABLE 1. DIFFERENCES OVER TIME: 1986-87 CONTENT ANALYSIS OF LOCAL TV NEWS COMPARED TO 1992-93 SAMPLE.

STORY FORM

1986-87 Count:	1986-87 Percent:		1992-93 Count:	1992-93 Percent:	
148	18.272	Reader	166	18.527%	
262	32.346	Voice Over	324	36.161%	-Mode
206	25.432	Voice Over/SOT	111	12.388%	
137	16.914	Reporter Package	171	19.085%	
*	*	Anchor Package	26	2.902%	
2	.247	Live Remote w/o video	8	.893%	
16	1.975	Live Remote w/video	39	4.353%	
3	3.704	Live on set/newsroom w/o video	5	.558%	
25	3.086	Live on set/newsroom w/video	28	3.125%	
11	1.358	Other	18	2.009%	

Mode

* Combined with VO/SOT in 1986-87 analysis

STORY TOPICS

1986-87 Count:	1986-87 Percent:		1992-93 Count:	1992-93 Percent:	
119	14.691	Violent Crime	172	19.196%	
27	3.333	Non-Violent Crime	30	3.348%	
90	11.111	Disaster/Accident	118	13.17%	
57	7.037	Health/Medicine	70	7.812%	
34	4.198	Education	33	3.683%	
107	13.210	Economics	76	8.482%	
157	19.383	Politics/Govt.	205	22.879%	-Mode
13	1.605	Personality Profile	28	3.125%	
14	1.728	Sports/News Block	18	2.009%	
6	.741	Weather/News Block	13	1.451%	
*	*	Environment	25	2.79%	
186	22.962	Other	108	12.054%	

* Not a separate category in 1986-87

STORY LOCATION

1986-87 Count:	1986-87 Percent:		1992-93 Count:	1992-93 Percent:	
201	24.815	City	234	26.116%	
149	18.395	Metro	100	11.161%	
64	7.901	ADI	115	12.835%	
108	13.333	State	103	11.496%	
21	2.593	Region	27	3.013%	
194	23.951	National	240	26.786%	-Mode
61	7.531	International	77	8.594%	

1986-87 sample had 3 stories as unspecified local and 9 as unspecified national.

TABLE 2

NEWSCAST RANK AND LOCAL V. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Simple Regression X_1: Newscast Rank Y_1: Local (0), Natl/Intl (1)

Count:	R:	R-squared:	Adj. R-squared:	RMS Residual:
702	.18	.032	.031	.474

Analysis of Variance Table

Source	DF:	Sum Squares:	Mean Square:	F-test:
REGRESSION	1	5.243	5.243	23.357
RESIDUAL	700	157.129	.224	p = .0001
TOTAL	701	162.372		

No Residual Statistics Computed

Note: 194 cases deleted with missing values.

Simple Regression X_1: Newscast Rank Y_1: Local (0), Natl/Intl (1)

Beta Coefficient Table

Variable:	Coefficient:	Std. Err.:	Std. Coeff.:	t-Value:	Probability:
INTERCEPT	.198				
SLOPE	.066	.014	.18	4.833	.0001

Confidence Intervals Table

Variable:	95% Lower:	95% Upper:	90% Lower:	90% Upper:
MEAN (X,Y)	.328	.398	.334	.393
SLOPE	.039	.093	.043	.088

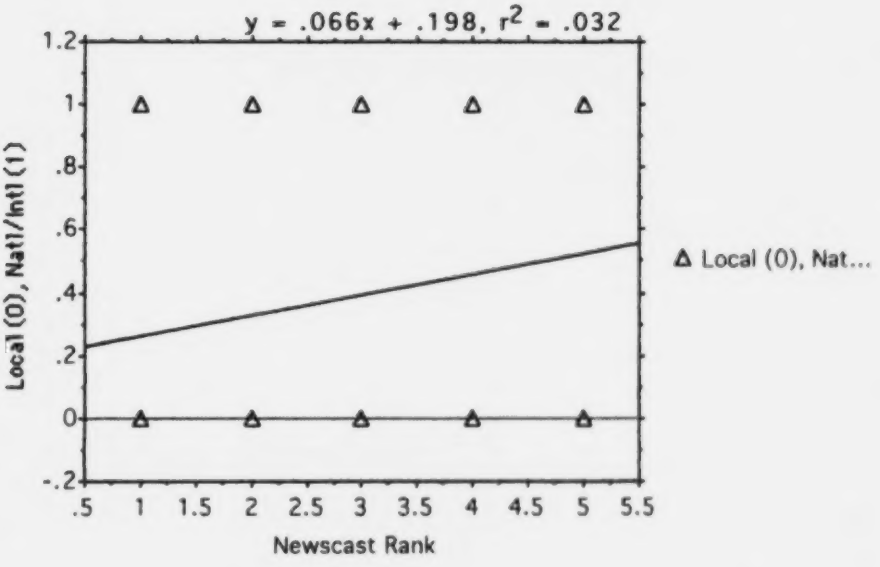


TABLE 3

NEWSCAST RANK AND LIVE REMOTES

Simple Regression X_1: Newscast Rank Y_1: Live Remote (1), Not (0)

Count:	R:	R-squared:	Adj. R-squared:	RMS Residual:
702	.083	.007	.005	.237

Analysis of Variance Table

Source	DF:	Sum Squares:	Mean Square:	F-test:
REGRESSION	1	.269	.269	4.797
RESIDUAL	700	39.218	.056	p = .0288
TOTAL	701	39.487		

No Residual Statistics Computed

Note: 194 cases deleted with missing values.

Simple Regression X_1: Newscast Rank Y_1: Live Remote (1), Not (0)

Beta Coefficient Table

Variable:	Coefficient:	Std. Err.:	Std. Coeff.:	t-Value:	Probability:
INTERCEPT	.097				
SLOPE	-.015	.007	-.083	2.19	.0288

Confidence Intervals Table

Variable:	95% Lower:	95% Upper:	90% Lower:	90% Upper:
MEAN (X,Y)	.042	.077	.045	.075
SLOPE	-.028	-.002	-.026	-.004

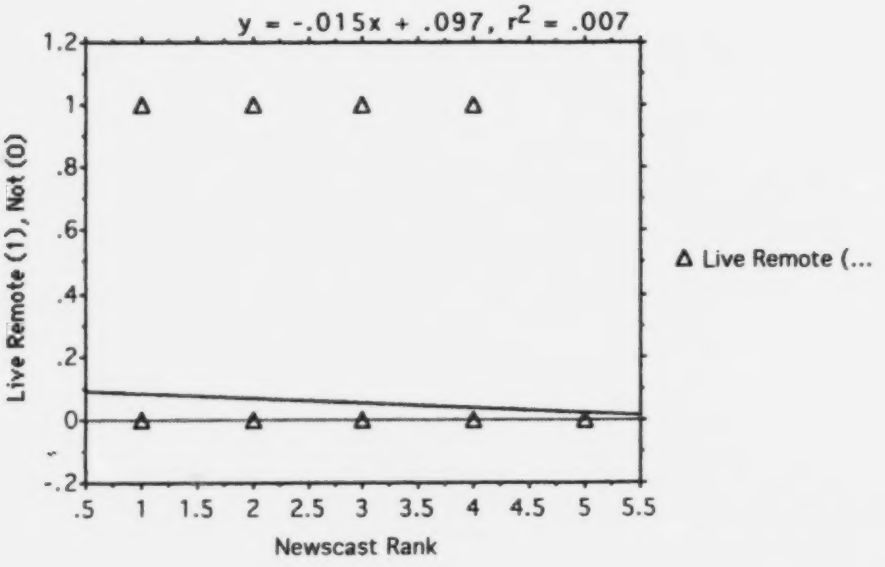


TABLE 4

NEWSCAST RANK AND STORY INITIATIVE

Simple Regression X_1: Newscast Rank Y_1: Low (0), High (1) Initiative

Count:	R:	R-squared:	Adj. R-squared:	RMS Residual:
700	.16	.026	.024	.49

Analysis of Variance Table

Source	DF:	Sum Squares:	Mean Square:	F-test:
REGRESSION	1	4.414	4.414	18.403
RESIDUAL	698	167.43	.24	p = .0001
TOTAL	699	171.844		

No Residual Statistics Computed

Note: 196 cases deleted with missing values.

Simple Regression X_1: Newscast Rank Y_1: Low (0), High (1) Initiative

Beta Coefficient Table

Variable:	Coefficient:	Std. Err.:	Std. Coeff.:	t-Value:	Probability:
INTERCEPT	.584				
SLOPE	-.061	.014	-.16	4.29	.0001

Confidence Intervals Table

Variable:	95% Lower:	95% Upper:	90% Lower:	90% Upper:
MEAN (X,Y)	.397	.469	.402	.463
SLOPE	-.088	-.033	-.084	-.037

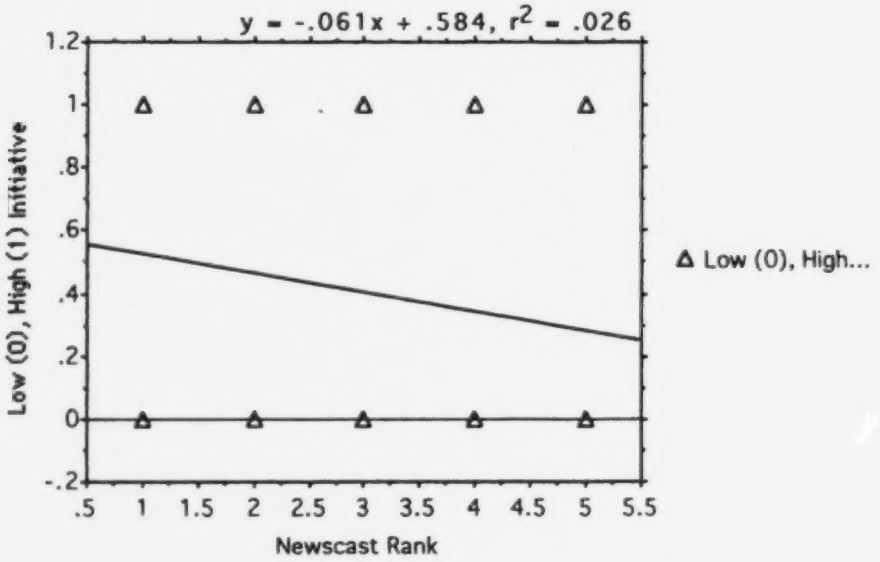


TABLE 5

NEWSCAST RATING AND LOCAL V. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL STORIES

Simple Regression X_1: Rating Y_1: Local (0), Natl/Intl (1)

Count:	R:	R-squared:	Adj. R-squared:	RMS Residual:
861	.123	.015	.014	.475

Analysis of Variance Table

Source	DF:	Sum Squares:	Mean Square:	F-test:
REGRESSION	1	2.996	2.996	13.29
RESIDUAL	859	193.668	.225	p = .0003
TOTAL	860	196.664		

No Residual Statistics Computed

Note: 35 cases deleted with missing values.

Simple Regression X_1: Rating Y_1: Local (0), Natl/Intl (1)

Beta Coefficient Table

Variable:	Coefficient:	Std. Err.:	Std. Coeff.:	t-Value:	Probability:
INTERCEPT	.453				
SLOPE	-.011	.003	-.123	3.646	.0003

Confidence Intervals Table

Variable:	95% Lower:	95% Upper:	90% Lower:	90% Upper:
MEAN (X,Y)	.321	.385	.326	.38
SLOPE	-.017	-.005	-.016	-.006

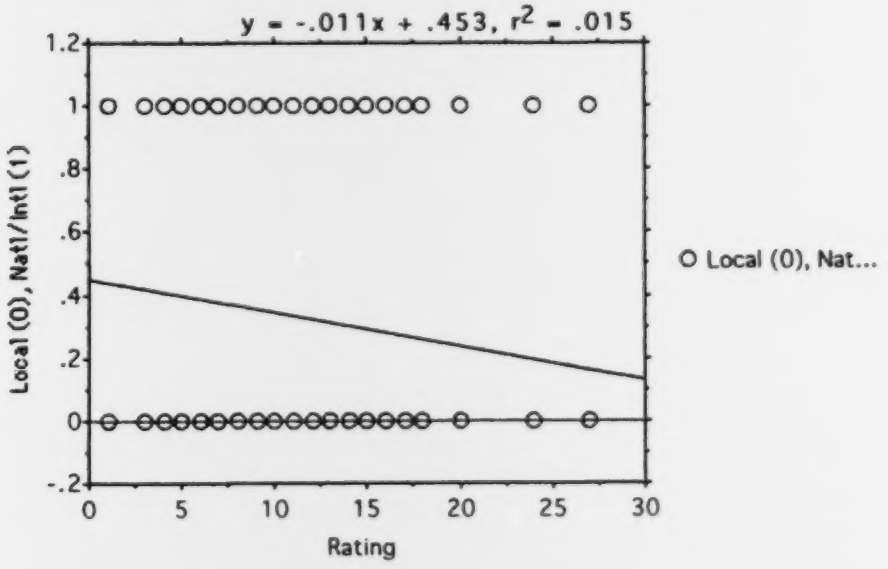


TABLE 6

NEWSCAST RATING AND STORY INITIATIVE

Simple Regression X_1: Rating Y_1: Low (0), High (1) Initiative

Count:	R:	R-squared:	Adj. R-squared:	RMS Residual:
859	.121	.015	.014	.494

Analysis of Variance Table

Source	DF:	Sum Squares:	Mean Square:	F-test:
REGRESSION	1	3.135	3.135	12.837
RESIDUAL	857	209.31	.244	p = .0004
TOTAL	858	212.445		

No Residual Statistics Computed

Note: 37 cases deleted with missing values.

Simple Regression X_1: Rating Y_1: Low (0), High (1) Initiative

Beta Coefficient Table

Variable:	Coefficient:	Std. Err.:	Std. Coeff.:	t-Value:	Probability:
INTERCEPT	.346				
SLOPE	.011	.003	.121	3.583	.0004

Confidence Intervals Table

Variable:	95% Lower:	95% Upper:	90% Lower:	90% Upper:
MEAN (X,Y)	.415	.481	.42	.476
SLOPE	.005	.017	.006	.016

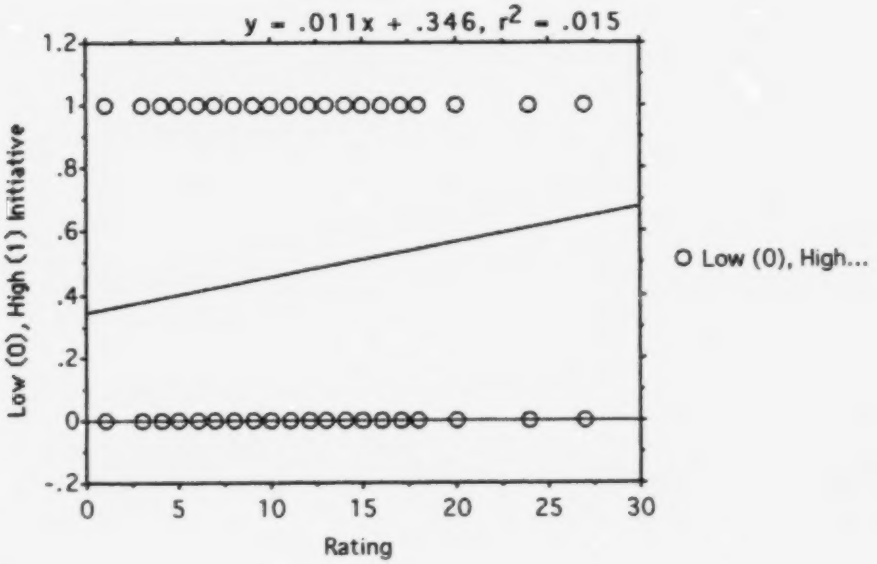


TABLE 7

NEWSCAST SHARE AND LOCAL V. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Simple Regression X_1: Share Y_1: Local (0), Natl/Intl (1)

Count:	R:	R-squared:	Adj. R-squared:	RMS Residual:
861	.131	.017	.016	.474

Analysis of Variance Table

Source	DF:	Sum Squares:	Mean Square:	F-test:
REGRESSION	1	3.382	3.382	15.032
RESIDUAL	859	193.282	.225	p = .0001
TOTAL	860	196.664		

No Residual Statistics Computed

Note: 35 cases deleted with missing values.

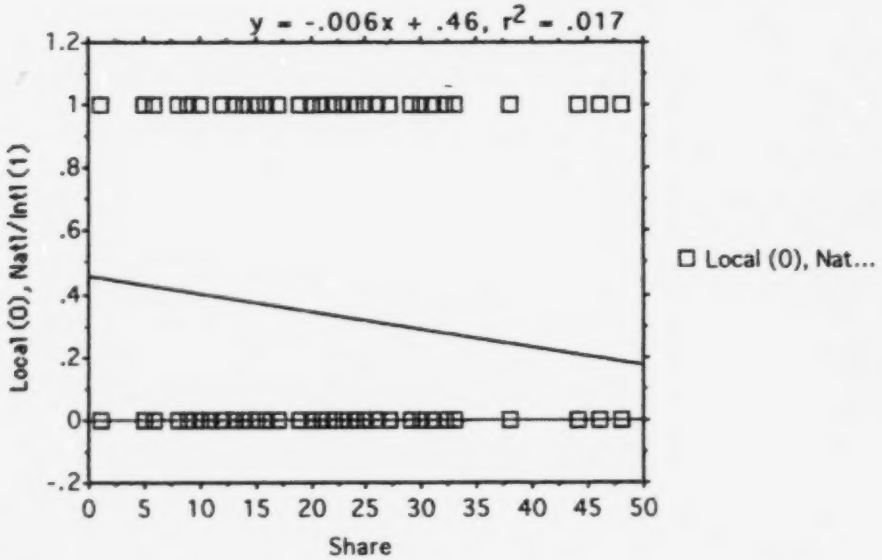
Simple Regression X_1: Share Y_1: Local (0), Natl/Intl (1)

Beta Coefficient Table

Variable:	Coefficient:	Std. Err.:	Std. Coeff.:	t-Value:	Probability:
INTERCEPT	.46				
SLOPE	-.006	.001	-.131	3.877	.0001

Confidence Intervals Table

Variable:	95% Lower:	95% Upper:	90% Lower:	90% Upper:
MEAN (X,Y)	.321	.385	.326	.38
SLOPE	-.009	-.003	-.008	-.003



NEWSCAST SHARE AND STORY INITIATIVE

Simple Regression X_1: Share Y_1: Low (0), High (1) Initiative

Count:	R:	R-squared:	Adj. R-squared:	RMS Residual:
859	.104	.011	.01	.495

Analysis of Variance Table

Source	DF:	Sum Squares:	Mean Square:	F-test:
REGRESSION	1	2.301	2.301	9.382
RESIDUAL	857	210.144	.245	p = .0023
TOTAL	858	212.445		

No Residual Statistics Computed

Note: 37 cases deleted with missing values.

Simple Regression X_1: Share Y_1: Low (0), High (1) Initiative

Beta Coefficient Table

Variable:	Coefficient:	Std. Err.:	Std. Coeff.:	t-Value:	Probability:
INTERCEPT	.36				
SLOPE	.005	.002	.104	3.063	.0023

Confidence Intervals Table

Variable:	95% Lower:	95% Upper:	90% Lower:	90% Upper:
MEAN (X,Y)	.415	.481	.42	.476
SLOPE	.002	.008	.002	.007

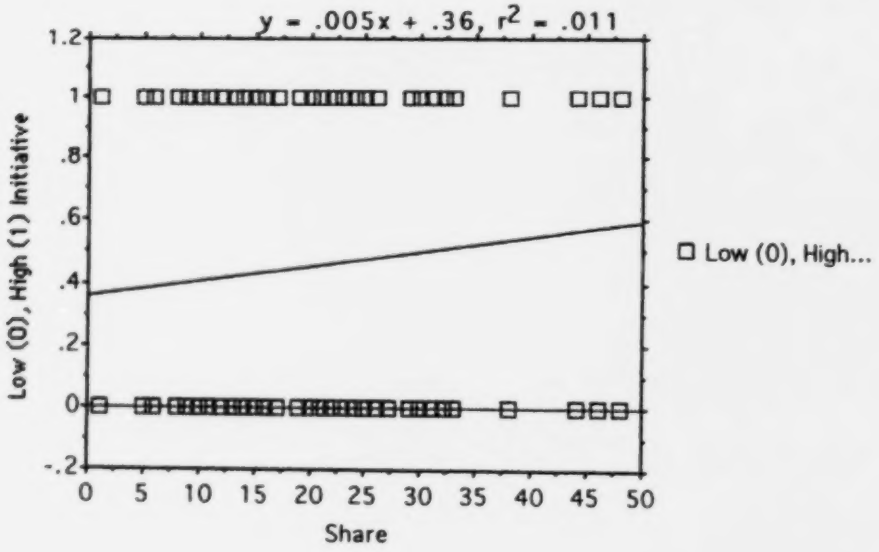


TABLE 9

VISUAL STORIES AND MARKET RANK

Simple Regression X_1: Rank Y_1: Visual (1), Not (0)*

Count:	R:	R-squared:	Adj. R-squared:	RMS Residual:
896	.077	.006	.005	.399

Analysis of Variance Table

Source	DF:	Sum Squares:	Mean Square:	F-test:
REGRESSION	1	.846	.846	5.312
RESIDUAL	894	142.394	.159	p = .0214
TOTAL	895	143.24		

No Residual Statistics Computed

Simple Regression X_1: Rank Y_1: Visual (1), Not (0)*

Beta Coefficient Table

Variable:	Coefficient:	Std. Err.:	Std. Coeff.:	t-Value:	Probability:
INTERCEPT	.835				
SLOPE	-.001	3.014E-4	-.077	2.305	.0214

Confidence Intervals Table

Variable:	95% Lower:	95% Upper:	90% Lower:	90% Upper:
MEAN (X,Y)	.774	.826	.778	.822
SLOPE	-.001	-1.031E-4	-.001	-1.983E-4

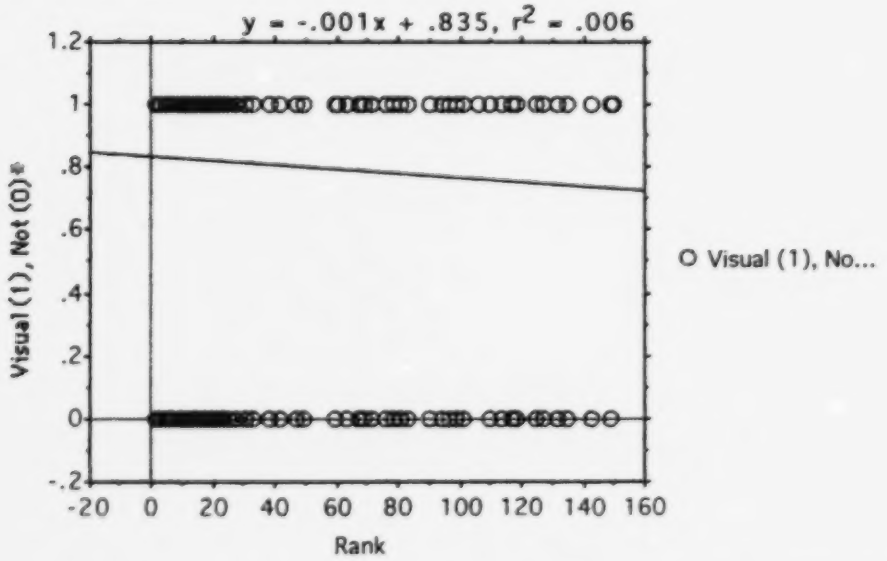


TABLE 10

MARKET RANK AND SENSATIONAL STORIES

Simple Regression X_1: Rank Y_1: Sens (1), Not (0)

Count:	R:	R-squared:	Adj. R-squared:	RMS Residual:
896	.085	.007	.006	.478

Analysis of Variance Table

Source	DF:	Sum Squares:	Mean Square:	F-test:
REGRESSION	1	1.494	1.494	6.538
RESIDUAL	894	204.221	.228	p = .0107
TOTAL	895	205.714		

Simple Regression X_1: Rank Y_1: Sens (1), Not (0)

Beta Coefficient Table

Variable:	Coefficient:	Std. Err.:	Std. Coeff.:	t-Value:	Probability:
INTERCEPT	.403				
SLOPE	-.001	3.610E-4	-.085	2.557	.0107

Confidence Intervals Table

Variable:	95% Lower:	95% Upper:	90% Lower:	90% Upper:
MEAN (X,Y)	.326	.388	.331	.383
SLOPE	-.002	-2.145E-4	-.002	-3.286E-4

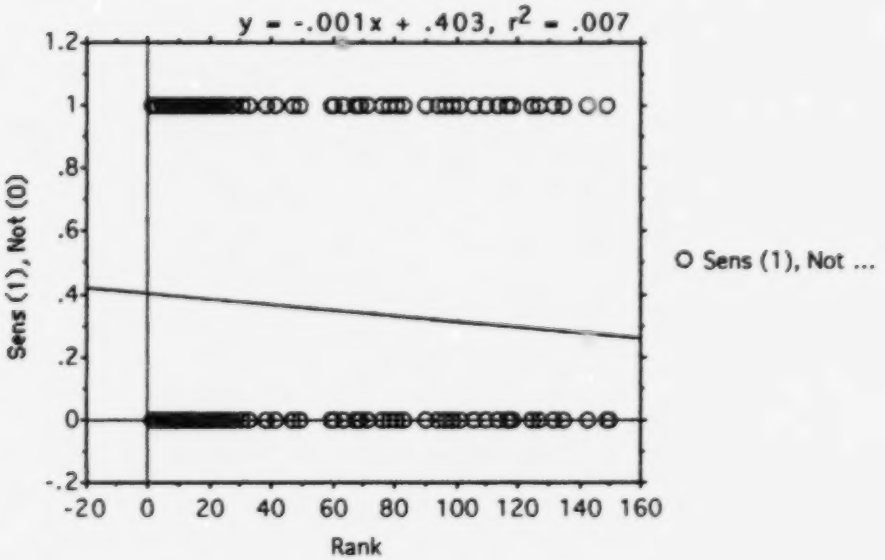


TABLE 11

MARKET RANK AND NUMBER OF SOUND BITES PER STORY

Simple Regression X_1: Rank Y_1: Number of Bites

Count:	R:	R-squared:	Adj. R-squared:	RMS Residual:
896	.09	.008	.007	2.033

Analysis of Variance Table

Source	DF:	Sum Squares:	Mean Square:	F-test:
REGRESSION	1	30.34	30.34	7.337
RESIDUAL	894	3696.784	4.135	p = .0069
TOTAL	895	3727.124		

No Residual Statistics Computed

Simple Regression X_1: Rank Y_1: Number of Bites

Beta Coefficient Table

Variable:	Coefficient:	Std. Err.:	Std. Coeff.:	t-Value:	Probability:
INTERCEPT	1.396				
SLOPE	-.004	.002	-.09	2.709	.0069

Confidence Intervals Table

Variable:	95% Lower:	95% Upper:	90% Lower:	90% Upper:
MEAN (X,Y)	1.055	1.322	1.077	1.3
SLOPE	-.007	-.001	-.007	-.002

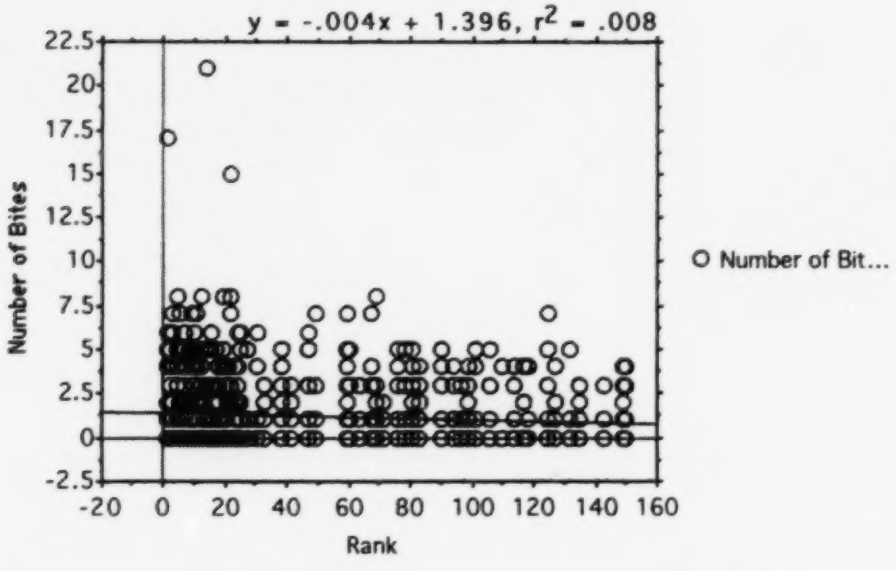


TABLE 12

MARKET RANK AND AVERAGE BITE LENGTH

Simple Regression X_1: Rank Y_1: Avg. Bite Length

Count:	R:	R-squared:	Adj. R-squared:	RMS Residual:
368	.121	.015	.012	10.211

Analysis of Variance Table

Source	DF:	Sum Squares:	Mean Square:	F-test:
REGRESSION	1	563.666	563.666	5.407
RESIDUAL	366	38157.443	104.255	p = .0206
TOTAL	367	38721.109		

No Residual Statistics Computed

Note: 528 cases deleted with missing values.

Simple Regression X_1: Rank Y_1: Avg. Bite Length

Beta Coefficient Table

Variable:	Coefficient:	Std. Err.:	Std. Coeff.:	t-Value:	Probability:
INTERCEPT	11.655				
SLOPE	.027	.012	.121	2.325	.0206

Confidence Intervals Table

Variable:	95% Lower:	95% Upper:	90% Lower:	90% Upper:
MEAN (X,Y)	11.997	14.09	12.166	13.921
SLOPE	.004	.051	.008	.047

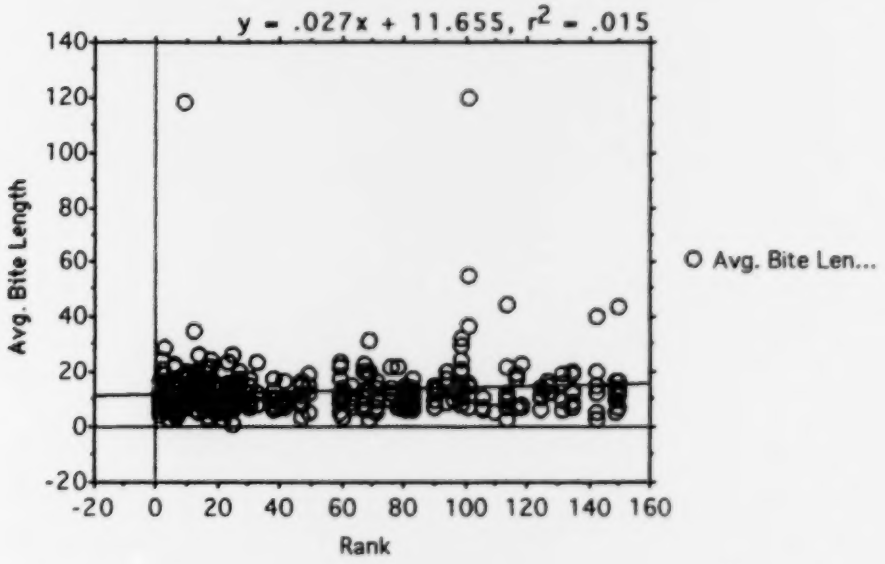


TABLE 13

NETWORK AFFILIATION AND SENSATIONAL STORIES (Violent Crime, Non-Violent Crime, and Disaster/Accident)

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Sens (1), Not (0)

Analysis of Variance Table

Source:	DF:	Sum Squares:	Mean Square:	F-test:
Between groups	4	2.337	.584	2.559
Within groups	891	203.378	.228	p = .0373
Total	895	205.714		

Model II estimate of between component variance = .002

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Sens (1), Not (0)

Group:	Count:	Mean:	Std. Dev.:	Std. Error:
ABC	206	.379	.486	.034
CBS	153	.32	.468	.038
NBC	213	.371	.484	.033
Fox	135	.444	.499	.043
Indep.	189	.286	.453	.033

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Sens (1), Not (0)

Comparison:	Mean Diff.:	Fisher PLSD:	Scheffe F-test:	Dunnett t:
ABC vs. CBS	.058	.1	.328	1.145
ABC vs. NBC	.008	.092	.007	.166
ABC vs. Fox	-.066	.104	.387	1.244
ABC vs. Indep.	.093	.094	.932	1.931
CBS vs. NBC	-.051	.099	.25	1

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Sens (1), Not (0)

Comparison:	Mean Diff.:	Fisher PLSD:	Scheffe F-test:	Dunnett t:
CBS vs. Fox	-.124	.111*	1.211	2.201
CBS vs. Indep.	.035	.102	.111	.665
NBC vs. Fox	-.074	.103	.49	1.399
NBC vs. Indep.	.085	.094	.796	1.784
Fox vs. Indep.	.159	.106*	2.173	2.948

* Significant at 95%

TABLE 14

NETWORK AFFILIATION AND LOCAL V. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Local (0), Natl/Intl (1)

Analysis of Variance Table

Source:	DF:	Sum Squares:	Mean Square:	F-test:
Between groups	4	8.891	2.223	10.107
Within groups	891	195.956	.22	p = .0001
Total	895	204.847		

Model II estimate of between component variance = .011

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Local (0), Natl/Intl (1)

Group:	Count:	Mean:	Std. Dev.:	Std. Error:
ABC	206	.316	.466	.032
CBS	153	.176	.382	.031
NBC	213	.399	.491	.034
Fox	135	.356	.48	.041
Indep.	189	.487	.501	.036

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Local (0), Natl/Intl (1)

Comparison:	Mean Diff.:	Fisher PLSD:	Scheffe F-test:	Dunnett t:
ABC vs. CBS	.139	.098*	1.93	2.778
ABC vs. NBC	-.084	.09	.831	1.823
ABC vs. Fox	-.04	.102	.148	.771
ABC vs. Indep.	-.171	.093*	3.285*	3.625
CBS vs. NBC	-.223	.098*	5.015*	4.479

* Significant at 95%

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Local (0), Natl/Intl (1)

Comparison:	Mean Diff.:	Fisher PLSD:	Scheffe F-test:	Dunnett t:
CBS vs. Fox	-.179	.109*	2.615*	3.234
CBS vs. Indep.	-.31	.1*	9.255*	6.084
NBC vs. Fox	.044	.101	.178	.843
NBC vs. Indep.	-.088	.092	.876	1.872
Fox vs. Indep.	-.131	.104*	1.541	2.483

* Significant at 95%

TABLE 15

NETWORK AFFILIATION AND LIVE REMOTES

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Live Remote (1), Not (0)

Analysis of Variance Table

Source:	DF:	Sum Squares:	Mean Square:	F-test:
Between groups	4	1.031	.258	5.281
Within groups	891	43.503	.049	p = .0003
Total	895	44.535		

Model II estimate of between component variance = .001

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Live Remote (1), Not (0)

Group:	Count:	Mean:	Std. Dev.:	Std. Error:
ABC	206	.102	.303	.021
CBS	153	.078	.27	.022
NBC	213	.038	.191	.013
Fox	135	.015	.121	.01
Indep.	189	.021	.144	.01

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Live Remote (1), Not (0)

Comparison:	Mean Diff.:	Fisher PLSD:	Scheffe F-test:	Dunnett t:
ABC vs. CBS	.024	.046	.248	.997
ABC vs. NBC	.064	.042*	2.223	2.982
ABC vs. Fox	.087	.048*	3.17*	3.561
ABC vs. Indep.	.081	.044*	3.293*	3.629
CBS vs. NBC	.041	.046	.762	1.745

* Significant at 95%

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Live Remote (1), Not (0)

Comparison:	Mean Diff.:	Fisher PLSD:	Scheffe F-test:	Dunnett t:
CBS vs. Fox	.064	.051*	1.486	2.438
CBS vs. Indep.	.057	.047*	1.42	2.383
NBC vs. Fox	.023	.048	.219	.936
NBC vs. Indep.	.016	.043	.138	.742
Fox vs. Indep.	-.006	.049	.016	.255

* Significant at 95%

TABLE 16

NETWORK AFFILIATION AND STORY INITIATIVE

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Low (0), High (1) Initiative

Analysis of Variance Table

Source:	DF:	Sum Squares:	Mean Square:	F-test:
Between groups	4	6.435	1.609	6.665
Within groups	889	214.594	.241	p = .0001
Total	893	221.029		

Model II estimate of between component variance = .008

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Low (0), High (1) Initiative

Group:	Count:	Mean:	Std. Dev.:	Std. Error:
ABC	206	.51	.501	.035
CBS	151	.583	.495	.04
NBC	213	.408	.493	.034
Fox	135	.422	.496	.043
Indep.	189	.333	.473	.034

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Low (0), High (1) Initiative

Comparison:	Mean Diff.:	Fisher PLSD:	Scheffe F-test:	Dunnett t:
ABC vs. CBS	-.073	.103	.482	1.388
ABC vs. NBC	.101	.094*	1.112	2.109
ABC vs. Fox	.087	.107	.646	1.608
ABC vs. Indep.	.176	.097*	3.176*	3.564
CBS vs. NBC	.174	.103*	2.781*	3.335

* Significant at 95%

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Low (0), High (1) Initiative

Comparison:	Mean Diff.:	Fisher PLSD:	Scheffe F-test:	Dunnett t:
CBS vs. Fox	.161	.114*	1.903	2.759
CBS vs. Indep.	.249	.105*	5.409*	4.652
NBC vs. Fox	-.014	.106	.016	.255
NBC vs. Indep.	.075	.096	.585	1.53
Fox vs. Indep.	.089	.109	.644	1.606

* Significant at 95%

TABLE 17

NETWORK AFFILIATION AND AVERAGE BITE LENGTH

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Avg. Bite Length

Analysis of Variance Table

Source:	DF:	Sum Squares:	Mean Square:	F-test:
Between groups	4	1003.76	250.94	2.415
Within groups	363	37717.349	103.905	p = .0485
Total	367	38721.109		

Model II estimate of between component variance = 2.008

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Avg. Bite Length

Group:	Count:	Mean:	Std. Dev.:	Std. Error:
ABC	73	11.103	5.947	.696
CBS	66	12.871	7.148	.88
NBC	91	15.745	17.155	1.798
Fox	61	12.444	6.647	.851
Indep.	77	12.313	5.973	.681

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Avg. Bite Length

Comparison:	Mean Diff.:	Fisher PLSD:	Scheffe F-test:	Dunnett t:
ABC vs. CBS	-1.768	3.405	.261	1.021
ABC vs. NBC	-4.642	3.15*	2.1	2.898
ABC vs. Fox	-1.341	3.478	.144	.758
ABC vs. Indep.	-1.21	3.275	.132	.727
CBS vs. NBC	-2.874	3.241	.76	1.744

* Significant at 95%

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Network Y_1: Avg. Bite Length

Comparison:	Mean Diff.:	Fisher PLSD:	Scheffe F-test:	Dunnett t:
CBS vs. Fox	.427	3.561	.014	.236
CBS vs. Indep.	.557	3.363	.027	.326
NBC vs. Fox	3.301	3.317	.957	1.957
NBC vs. Indep.	3.431	3.104*	1.181	2.174
Fox vs. Indep.	.131	3.436	.001	.075

* Significant at 95%

TABLE 18

HALF V. HOUR NEWSCASTS: TIME (All Stories)

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Half/Hour Y_1: Time

Analysis of Variance Table

Source:	DF:	Sum Squares:	Mean Square:	F-test:
Between groups	1	96353.877	96353.877	29.845
Within groups	893	2883047.136	3228.496	p = .0001
Total	894	2979401.012		

Model II estimate of between component variance = 216.975

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Half/Hour Y_1: Time

Group:	Count:	Mean:	Std. Dev.:	Std. Error:
Half	538	54.993	45.591	1.966
Hour	357	76.182	70.449	3.729

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Half/Hour Y_1: Time

Comparison:	Mean Diff.:	Fisher PLSD:	Scheffe F-test:	Dunnett t:
Half vs. Hour	-21.19	7.613*	29.845*	5.463

* Significant at 95%

TABLE 19

HALF V. HOUR NEWSCASTS: PACKAGE AND REPORTER SEGMENT LENGTH

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Half/Hour Y_1: Time

Analysis of Variance Table

Source:	DF:	Sum Squares:	Mean Square:	F-test:
Between groups	1	61187.54	61187.54	19.847
Within groups	275	847805.716	3082.93	p = .0001
Total	276	908993.256		

Model II estimate of between component variance = 419.971

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Half/Hour Y_1: Time

Group:	Count:	Mean:	Std. Dev.:	Std. Error:
Half	143	114.028	41.56	3.475
Hour	134	143.769	67.308	5.815

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Half/Hour Y_1: Time

Comparison:	Mean Diff.:	Fisher PLSD:	Scheffe F-test:	Dunnett t:
Half vs. Hour	-29.741	13.143*	19.847*	4.455

* Significant at 95%

TABLE 20

HALF V. HOUR NEWSCASTS: LOCAL V. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL STORIES

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Half/Hour Y_1: Local (0), Natl/Intl (1)

Analysis of Variance Table

Source:	DF:	Sum Squares:	Mean Square:	F-test:
Between groups	1	1.806	1.806	7.953
Within groups	894	203.041	.227	p = .0049
Total	895	204.847		

Model II estimate of between component variance = .004

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Half/Hour Y_1: Local (0), Natl/Intl (1)

Group:	Count:	Mean:	Std. Dev.:	Std. Error:
Half	539	.317	.466	.02
Hour	357	.409	.492	.026

One Factor ANOVA X_1: Half/Hour Y_1: Local (0), Natl/Intl (1)

Comparison:	Mean Diff.:	Fisher PLSD:	Scheffe F-test:	Dunnett t:
Half vs. Hour	-.092	.064*	7.953*	2.82

* Significant at 95%

TABLOID TELEVISION EXPOSED:
THE ARCHITECTURAL STRUCTURE OF *HARD COPY*

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TABLOID TELEVISION EXPOSED:
THE ARCHITECTURAL STRUCTURE OF *HARD COPY*

Introduction

Given the limited research devoted to tabloid television news programs and their recent proliferation and popularity, several key reasons surface as rationale for exploring the genre, particularly its structure. First, as a combination of fiction and highbrow news strategies and techniques, tabloid television programs represent an intriguing hybrid of aesthetic and communication disciplines intent on impacting an audience. As such, they need to be studied so that their effects can be understood. Second, as aesthetic and communication hybrids, their effects evolve, at least in part, from program structure or architecture, especially in terms of how that structure replicates or departs from fiction and news. For example, as a form of storytelling, tabloid television optimizes narrative strategies and techniques common to fiction, particularly first-person narration, the benefits of which center on audience involvement. On the other hand, as a form of news, tabloid television optimizes communication strategies and techniques for suggesting authoritative accuracy and truthfulness in program fare. Third, tabloid television's structure, as it is with the structure of art, literary, or communication objects generally, functions as a thermostat for viewer comfort levels, making the understanding, acceptance, and credibility of the program as art object more manageable for the viewer.

Our objective is to provide a workable, exploratory interpretation of a specific tabloid television program structure as a means for achieving certain effects. An overview of tabloid news history, followed by a description of tabloid television genres, precedes an examination of tabloid television popularity. Focus here is on *Hard Copy* , one of the most enduring and popular tabloid programs. A descriptive

interpretation of *Hard Copy's* macrostructure and microstructure follows this foregrounding, with emphasis placed on the linear movement through time as a means for organizing the structure. Focus, too, is given to fiction and news as ways for enriching the understanding of structure and its effects.

Introduction to Tabloid News

The origination of the word tabloid in a mass media context dates back to the turn of the century, when it was "applied metaphorically from its initial chemical-medicinal context where it referred to anything given or taken in a compressed or condensed form." (Knight 94). According to Knight, tabloid news is a special idiom, different and distinctive from other forms of news because of its "topic, accent, emphasis, [and] style." (94). Knight refers specifically to two distinct characteristics of tabloid news; one is the "focus on the immoral and the illegal," and the other is the "stylistic emphasis on the subjective in news coverage." (94 -95).

The history of tabloid in mass media dates back to 1833 and the *New York Sun* newspaper under the ownership and guidance of Benjamin Day. Though not known as tabloid at that point in time, *The Sun* as an example of the famed penny press began publishing human interest and crime articles, much unlike its more literate and upscale predecessors. Then, with competition for readership rising dramatically in the decades following the Civil War, Joseph Pulitzer founded the *New York World* in the late 1890s. The *World* was a newspaper boasting more than a 300,000 circulation figure for its Sunday edition. This large circulation has been credited to Pulitzer's "crusades" in emphasizing disasters or melodramatics in order to "intensify reader interest" (DeFleur and Dennis 88-89). Known as "yellow journalism," Pulitzer's "crusades" elicited competitive response from publishing giants such as William Randolph Hearst.

With the tradition for yoking reader interest through sensationalized stories firmly in place, print variations appeared throughout the twentieth-century, most notably the "muckraking" tradition in the magazines of the early 1900s (DeFleur and Dennis 130 -31). With the advent and rapidly increasing popularity of television in the 1950s, however, heated debates about journalism's role and style in disseminating the news ensued. The massive social changes and influences of the 1960s, including the Vietnam War, prompted journalists to question whether objectivity in journalistic reporting provided adequate and fair perspectives and information. Consequently, several journalistic styles emerged from the period, with two being the "new journalism" featuring scene-setting, extended dialogue, and varying points of view, and the second being the advocacy style where the reporter and the story advocate a cause or position (DeFleur and Dennis 401 - 03).

Embedded firmly into the press and the exciting new medium of television, sensationalized or otherwise subjective storytelling deepened its roots in American culture. By the mid to late 1980s, television talk shows tackled social issues associated with the tabloid phenomenon. And by the late 1980s into the early 1990s, tabloid television programs, similar to press tabloids of decades earlier, grew in number and popularity. One of the most influential and enduring of the tabloid television programs has been *Hard Copy* , featured every weeknight from 7:30 to 8:00 EST on CBS.

Tabloid Television as a Genre: Fiction and News

It is difficult to pinpoint the defining characteristics of tabloid television. Fiske describes the subject matter of tabloid as that which lies at the intersection between public and private lives. The style is sensational, at times skeptical, and often motivated by moral concerns within a populist tone of address. Moreover,

Fiske argues that the tabloid style resists separation between fiction, documentary, news, and entertainment. We acknowledge tabloid television's blurring of the lines between these genres, but we also contend that its hybrid character is perhaps best understood in terms of both similarity with and departure from fiction and highbrow news, or what Fiske calls "official news." In this sense, the content, form, and function of tabloid television can be analyzed in reference to the characteristics of fiction and highbrow news.

Traditionally, television audiences view news as a source of information, while fiction readers tend to view their reading as entertainment. However, Bird argues that all journalistic enterprises must entertain in order to meet and invigorate public demand, thus shifting such enterprises beyond pure informational goals. She argues that highbrow news is not entirely void of the entertaining trivia that characterizes tabloid journalism. Knight also appears skeptical of highbrow news as purely an objective information source. He argues that all television genres blend fiction and nonfiction, information and entertainment, while at the same time going to great lengths to ensure that these boundaries are artificially maintained and publicly recognized. But Bird moves beyond the questionable purity of highbrow news intentions to inform the public. She reassesses the importance and relevance of highbrow information to the lives of ordinary people. According to Bird, tabloid readers see highbrow journalism as having little use or relevance to their lives. Consequently, the content of tabloid, which has been dismissed by highbrow news intellectuals as trivial, exerts an informational and entertainment impact on the lives of many Americans.

Fiske maintains the important informational function of official, highbrow news. He describes highbrow news as an objective investigation of an empirical reality. The tone of official television news presentations appears serious and impersonal, implying credibility as a result. The differences between tabloid and

highbrow news content and functions become clear from these conflicting scholarly views. Unlike highbrow news, which aspires to be society's objective watchdog on reality and pretends to focus primarily on meaty and timely political and economic issues, tabloid news openly favors subjective news coverage of scandal, human tragedy, and disruption of everyday life. In short, it appears as though highbrow news content and form claim objectivity, while tabloid favors subjectivity. Indeed, Knight argues just this position when he claims that tabloid places "a stylistic emphasis on the *subjective* in news coverage." (95)

Curiously, both these genres claim authenticity through the application of remarkably different styles. Highbrow news follows a traditional path of arriving at authenticity by distancing itself as an objective source of actuality. On the other hand, tabloid news follows a recipe of involvement or subjectivity to produce authenticity and credibility. Reporters become part of the human interest drama, and the subjective eyewitness camera viewpoint is employed to draw the viewer into the news stories. Identification, empathy or involvement often result. As Knight states, tabloid news "acts as a mirror, not in the conventional sense as an attempt at reflection of reality, but as an instrument through which the viewer is encouraged to recognize him/herself in meaningful ways." (106)

The structural features of tabloid television differ subtly from highbrow news in their emphasis on subjectivity and participation through dramatizing and re-enacting news events. Tabloid does not turn news into fiction, but rather neutralizes news in favor of an emotionally involved audience. At the same time, such an effect parallels reader responses to fiction, especially first-person fiction where the immediacy and personalism of the narrator, either as witness or protagonist, evokes strong reader identification, empathy, or involvement (Friedman; Harding; Holland; Lanser; Marra; Romberg). Indeed, one could argue that tabloid television makes strategic use of fictional techniques, primarily to

generate such effects. For instance, first-person narration theorists point to the intimacy of the narrative voice in helping to generate reader involvement and concern with the narrator and characters. Such theorists also point to the common use of diaries, journals, photographs, and sundry other hard realities in first-person narration as evidence of truthfulness in the fiction, thus the attribution of credibility to the narrator and the story. In tabloid television, the use of such hard realities is commonplace.

Even when one considers highbrow news, the element of story or fiction surfaces as a key ingredient. LaBaschin, for example, argues that television news producers realize the essentially narrative structure of television, and therefore present news as stories with beginnings, middles, and ends. Bird too, supports this proposition and claims that all forms of journalism essentially owe their practice to the oral tradition of storytelling. One scholar, Garofalo, addresses the narrative and stylistic differences between television news and television fiction shows. Television news offers brief reports on a large number of issues, thereby providing second-hand accounts of supposed facts. By contrast, television fiction offers a detailed first-hand account of plot development, interaction between plot functional characters, and the consequences of the story. In short, fictional storytelling displays more central, succinct, and detailed concern with the links between motives, means, and ends. Television news similarly displays characteristics of storytelling, but the motives, means, and ends are typically presented in short and fragmented portions of a disconnected array of news items. With tabloid television, short and fragmented portions of news items are presented, but internally, within the items or stories themselves, they are often connected through a more narrative structural and thematic unity.

It can be argued that tabloid television news storytelling lies somewhere between these two storytelling formats. Tabloid maintains an interest in supposedly

factual stories, but the narratives are not quite as detailed or elaborated as in the fictionalized television dramas. Yet, tabloid narratives are more detailed and elaborated than news items. Consequently, tabloid television news occupies its own position as a hybrid genre communicating through a narrative structure closely resembling that of fiction, particularly the more involving first-person narrative fiction. As a result, tabloid television news presents news actuality as an involving part of the subjective reality of its viewers.

Given its uniqueness as a hybrid genre synthesized from fiction and news, one would think that research into tabloid television would be plentiful, but such is not the case. Proliferating and apparently prospering, tabloid television commands significant amounts of network and audience time. It seems reasonable, then, to expand the dialogue about this relatively young television phenomenon.

One way of approaching the programming on television tabloid is by classifying it according to genre. Of course, genre studies are not new, having been applied consistently over time, especially to the more revered arts such as literature. Given the current number of tabloid television programs, in particular those that meet Knight's criteria of the immoral or illegal and the subjective, there are distinct differences to be found in their compositional structures and presentations. We have categorized the programs as follows:

Eye Witness Tabloid - Here, the emphasis is on raw reality where the viewer bears witness to actual events. Programs such as *Cops* or *Real Stories of the Highway Patrol* fit into this category. This can be likened to first-person eye-witness narration where the narrator recedes in favor of the story or characters, thus stimulating the reader to become more involved (See Exhibit 1).

Re-enactment Tabloid - Here, actual events of the past are re-created with actors, thus presumably mirroring those past events. A prime example would be the program, *Unsolved Mysteries*. This can be likened to first-person retrospective narration where the reader depends on the long or short-term memory of the narrator for accuracy in the transmission of the story (see Exhibit 1).

Dialogic Tabloid - Here, vested individuals reveal their sides of stories or issues, generally in an open format monitored and hosted by celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey, Phil Donahue, or Montel Williams. This can be likened to the dialogic intercourse occurring in first-person narration relatively unconcerned with scene or event as fictional elements (see Exhibit 1).

HyperNews Tabloid - Here, actual events may be part of the stories, but they are not the entire part. As a patchwork quilt of storytelling, the programs in this genre rely on a strategic mix of actual events, on-site, but not necessarily on-scene photos and filming, interviews, narrators (anchors and field reporters), music, and assorted combinations of print headlining and imagery. Reconstruction of what may have been the actual story is a typical means of presentation. Programs of this kind include *A Current Affair , Inside Edition, American Journal*, and *Hard Copy* (see Exhibit 1).

As its own special kind of hybrid, this form of tabloid television makes use of techniques from all the previous tabloid kinds, namely eye witness, re-enactment, and dialogic. It also embeds highbrow news elements and techniques into its format and structure, thus occupying a middle ground between fiction and news. Indeed, that middle ground may result in a hyperextension of the story, making it more real through such techniques as re-enactment, personalization, and joint viewer,

anchor, and reporter immersion inside the story itself and its participants and background. As a result of its combination of fiction and news strategies and techniques, its sensationalized aspects keeping it within the tradition of tabloid generally and thus extending it beyond pure news, and its hyperextension of reality, we have termed it HyperNews.

Our emphasis here is on the HyperNews genre, particularly the program, *Hard Copy*. Given the importance of the fact that *Hard Copy* leads in ratings and shares for this type of tabloid program in the Philadelphia area (see upcoming section on ratings and shares and Exhibit 2) and is also curiously absent from the existing research on tabloid television, we focused our attention on the program and its structural presentation to the viewer. After initially reviewing a number of *Hard Copy* programs, we believed there was a definite rhythm, pattern or structure to each program. After closer examination and interpretation of three programs aired in February, 1994, we determined that a structural description of *Hard Copy* would reveal insightful perspectives on the program's compositional format and intent. Such perspectives, we believe, will help open the dialogue about this relatively new television phenomenon, tabloid television. Our interpretation led to a splitting of the program into two structural models, one on macrostructure and the other on microstructure.

The Popularity of Tabloid Television (A.C. Nielsen Ratings and Shares for the Philadelphia area, February 1994.)

The popularity and consequent impact of tabloid television, especially *Hard Copy* , can be seen clearly in a review of the A. C. Nielsen ratings and shares of the tabloid programs, two important measurements often dictating the inevitable success or failure of a program. The rating of a particular program "measures the

percent of all households owning a television set. . . that are watching a particular program." (Rothschild 386). This contrasts with the share, which "measures the percent of those television sets in use at any time that are tuned to a particular program." (Rothschild 376-77). Thus, ratings measure the watching of particular programs compared to all households with television sets, while shares measure the watching of particular programs compared to other programs on television at the same time. The main difference between the two terms centers on whether the television is on at the time (share) versus simply in the household (rating).

Of course, network executives and advertisers pay close and careful attention to the Nielsen ratings and shares, believing for the most part that they signal audience likeability of the various programs. That likeability or popularity then results in increased advertising expenditures, thus increased revenues for the network on which the most popular programs are aired.

To gain a frame of reference regarding the ratings and shares of some of the most popular and watched programs on television, consider that as recently as the February Nielsen reports for the Philadelphia area(see Exhibit 2), the *Oprah Winfrey Show* (Dialogic Tabloid) garnered an 18.3 rating from 4:00 PM to 4:30 PM and a 21.2 rating from 4:30 PM to 5:00 PM, obviously picking up in the last half-hour as more people found the time to tune into the show. That particular rating is extremely high indeed, representing the highest rating number for all of daytime, entertainment programming. In contrast, for instance, the *Donahue Show* (Dialogic Tabloid) received ratings in the 8.5 range, and the most popular soap opera, *The Young and the Restless,* received ratings in the 11.2 range.

When considering the Nielsen shares, Oprah climbed from 40.8 in the program's first half-hour to 43.7 in the second half-hour. Importantly, however, Oprah 's share of the women age 25 to 49 hovered around 50, meaning that approximately one-half of all 25 to 49 year old women watching television or

having the television on at the time had the set tuned to the *Oprah Winfrey Show*. Oprah 's closest competitor was the *Montel Williams Show* (Dialogic Tabloid), whose program placed a distant second with ratings in the range of 6 and shares in the range of 14.

The rating and share performance of the tabloid programs at 5:00 PM, 5:30 PM, and 7:00 PM EST is mixed. As Exhibit 2 reveals, both *Inside Edition* (5:00 to 5:30, HyperNews Tabloid) and *A Current Affair* (5:30 to 6:00, HyperNews Tabloid) garner ratings in the range of 7 and shares of households in the range of 13. However, their shares of women aged 25 to 49 rise to the range of 15. One of the newest tabloid programs, *American Journal* (7:00 to 7:30, HyperNews Tabloid), has a more lackluster performance, with ratings in the range of 5 and shares in the range of 8 for households and 7 for women, perhaps due to the stiff competition of *Jeopardy* and *Entertainment Tonight*. In this competitive sense, *American Journal 's* performance may be considered better than one might expect.

It is with *Hard Copy* (HyperNews Tabloid), however, that one can more clearly see the importance of tabloid television. Though trailing the *Wheel of Fortune* in ratings, *Hard Copy* still posts impressive numbers, particularly in its share of women age 25 to 49. Notice, for example, that more women age 25 to 49 watch *Hard Copy* than *Wheel of Fortune*. Even given that difference, the ratings and shares of *Hard Copy* generally are high when compared to previous tabloid programs or, except in a few instances such as with *Oprah* or news shows, any other programs aired during the day and early evening. This, of course, may be due to factors other than the quality of the show itself, most notably the greater prospect for post-dinner time viewing. Clearly, however, and despite the recent proliferation of tabloid television programs, *Hard Copy* retains its strong viewership position, particularly among women 25 to 49.

Hard Copy Macrostructure

The macrostructure of *Hard Copy* consists of ten to thirteen program segments, usually no longer than five minutes and no shorter than one minute (see Exhibit 3). The macrostructure from the program's beginning to end suggests a staccato movement through time, though one obviously patterned to yoke and then retain audience viewership. For example, each program begins with a two minute segment introduced through a rapid dissemination of sensory images. These include a voice-over dramatic call heralding "Tonight on *Hard Copy*. . .," followed by intense theme music with the high-impact *Hard Copy* type ball slammed toward the viewer, and thirty-second scoops or synopses of the stories to follow, complete with music beds consistent in tonality with the various stories and typescript on screen, usually in blocked and bold typefaces. This segment closes with the typeball again slammed toward the viewer and the introduction of the program's lead host, Barry Nolan, who announces the date and claims that "This is *Hard Copy*."

The brevity of the opening (two minutes to cover program logo, introductions, and stories with their scoops) serves as exposition for the program fare to follow. In much the same way that the introduction to a fictional story and the headlines of nightly highbrow news casts lay out the field of play for the reader, building tension and expectation in the process, so the two minute opening to *Hard Copy* orients the viewer with foreshadowing of things to come. Despite the fact that it is only two minutes long, the opening foreshadows the remaining twenty-five minutes of program time, generally blocked out in four minute story segments interspersed with one to two minute vignettes idiosyncratic to *Hard Copy*. These include *Hard Copy 's* Voice Mail messages and teasers of stories for the next day.

As seen graphically on the flow chart in Exhibit 3, the macrostructure includes a tight, terse beginning and ending. As explained previously, *Hard Copy* 's

beginning serves as exposition or foreshadowing for the stories and segments to follow. The ending tends to link stories of the past to the present time through voice mail responses from viewers and to foreshadow again the next day's programming fare.

Of approximately equal length, the beginning and ending provide stocky bookends for containing the stories, in much the same way that fiction storytelling creates unity by circling the story ending back to the story beginning. As formulaic structures in their own right, the beginning and ending also provide a tonal consistency while shaping viewer expectations program to program, thus allowing the viewer to feel comfortable and cozy despite the disturbing content of many of the stories. In a sense, the beginning and ending structures make the information conveyed more manageable for the viewer, especially since the viewer need not struggle with surprises or looseness in the governing structure.

Internally, the story segments themselves provide structural consistency as well. Notice, for example, how the time frames of the stories preceding and following the main commercial break are of approximate equal length, with four minutes serving as the optimum time. Generally there are three to four stories per program, with at least two stories prior to the program's midpoint in time, followed then by one or two stories in the program's latter half.

Despite this structural consistency, however, there is a tendency to embed more fragmentation in the program's latter half, perhaps addressing the potential danger of lost audience attention over time. In short, the segments of the latter half tend to be both more numerous and shorter. For instance, Exhibit 3 also shows a side by side graphic comparison of the show's first half and second half segments as they reflect blocks of time. Notice how the first half segments (at the 50% mark) total five, while the second half segments total eight. Notice, too, how the first half segments move from the two minute opening to two stories of four minutes each,

then to the transitional shift back to the host, followed by a commercial block of from one to two minutes of three to five commercials. This contrasts with the second half segments which move quickly from the host to the next story, then to the studio again, this time for teasers of stories to follow the impending commercial break, followed by the commercial break and possibly another story, another commercial break, and vignettes or even promotions such as voice mail responses.

What this kind of macrostructure suggests, then, is the increasing speed and fragmentation of the program as it moves through time. Though our study did not find major changes in story formats or inconsistencies in visual devices one half of the program to the next, the basic time designations for segments reveal a sense of gathering speed and fragmented units of messages. In short, things get quicker and shorter as the program moves past the midway point in time.

Despite the crispness of time blocks and delineation in *Hard Copy 's* macrostructure, as with carefully composed fiction, such blocks and delineations require a threading or framing of one element with another as they pass through time. Such transitions are needed to create program unity and to bind together what may be construed initially as diverse and often disparate segments. To this end, the program provides narrative continuity and dependability through its co-hosts, Barry Nolan and Terry Murphy, and its investigative field reporters, Diane Dimond and Doug Bruckner. For example, a typical transition of one segment to another consists of on-camera close-ups of the hosts, who then introduce the segment to come and thus provide stability of focus and orientation for the viewer. With the ending of one story or segment comes the inevitable talking head (i.e., Barry Nolan) who acts as the bridge through time and content. This is not unlike fictional narration, particularly of the first-person genre, where the narrator intercedes between potential or real dislocations in story time or plot.

Though there is substantial program time overlaid by voice-over narration, the real life embodiments of hosts and reporters overcome the potential audience distancing associated with a disembodied voice. In many ways, the sensations of yoking sound and sight together in real people are more captivating than relying on one or the other of those sensations. This serves as an additional benefit in maximizing the role of the hosts and reporters beyond their need as bridge builders linking program stories or segments together.

The chart in Exhibit 4 depicts the appearance of hosts in relationship to the stories and segments, highlighting their importance as linking devices. Notice, for instance, how the hosts, Barry Nolan and Terry Murphy, serve more as a bridge between stories and segments than between the individual story or segment elements such as interviews or video depictions of protagonists or antagonists. Thus, when one story or segment ends, it is the hosts who tend to occupy the camera. However, once inside the story or segment, then it is the reporters who occupy the camera. In essence, at the story or segment's outset, the hosts pass the narrative torch to the reporters, who then thread together the various story or segment elements.

Overall and despite whatever narrative dangers may be inherent to changing thematic or topical interest through story or segment shifts, the hosts and reporters manage to maintain the steadiness and stability of program unity. As a rapid and continuous stream of fleeting images shuttle the viewer from one interviewee or video depiction to the next, the very appearance of the hosts and reporters suggests to the audience that all is in tact and under control. Indeed, with the hosts located centrally and uniformly in a studio embellished with symbolic trappings, they act both as a source and refuge for the safe harbor of a viewer's journey through disturbing waters. They manage, in effect, to provide a single point of safe and

secure reference for the viewer, who is brought intermittently and strategically back to a home base for comfort and orientation.

With the reporters, however, a bit of a different dynamic exists. Their appearance within and not usually between the story and segment structures provides the viewer with a point of reference and a home base within the story or segment context. This may explain why the reporters are often on-location, specifically the location associated with the actual story. This technique resembles the familiar fiction device found often in first-person narration, that of a frame within a frame. On a larger scale the host creates the larger frame of story to story. On a smaller scale the reporters create the smaller frame of the narrative elements within each story. In order to help legitimize the story itself, the reporters move on-location, suggesting the representational veracity and authenticity of the actual story. On occasion, however, the reporters move to the studio where, once again, they are surrounded by the symbolic trappings associated with story veracity and authenticity.

Hard Copy Microstructure

Typically, there are three or four individual stories within the *Hard Copy* program (see Exhibit 5), each lasting two to five minutes. These individual story structures include all the key ingredients of *Hard Copy* story construction, e.g. visual material with voice-over, music, and interviews. Within the stories themselves, however, two distinct structural types emerge. The first is the mini-documentary, also the most commonly used structure. Here, producers use visual material with voice-over and short sound-bite interviews to construct the narrative. The visual material (i.e., cinema verité, on location shooting, still photographs) and interviews are segmented into 10 to 15 second blocks. This structure is usually

employed when visual material is available to the producers and the story lends itself to visual exploration.

The second structural type is the formal interview relying more strongly on the interviewee's ability to tell the story. Here, there is less emphasis on visual material and voice over, and more focus on the interviewee's first-hand account of the story. Formal interviews are used when the interviewee is a celebrity, or when the interviewee happens to possess inside information or perspective to make the account of the event more dramatic and credible. For example, *Hard Copy* may be inclined to show an interview with a former employee of Michael Jackson, assuming that the employee also witnessed first-hand Michael Jackson's alleged child molestation.

As with short stories, the individual *Hard Copy* stories are titled. This provides an enticement and foreshadowing, as well as an abbreviated summary of the scoop, e.g. Renegade Rodeo, My Secret Tonya and The Secrets of Neverland. These titles often refer to existing literary works, popular music, or films. Consequently, they add stature to the story by associating it with popular texts.

The roles of the studio hosts and field reporters are clearly defined within the microstructure. The two hosts, Barry Nolan and Terry Murphy, seldom appear outside the *Hard Copy* studio, itself emblazoned with a neon *Hard Copy* sign and the symbolic trappings of a busy newsroom in the background. When Nolan and/or Murphy are out in the field, they still maintain their status as anchors or host presenters. They appear before and after each story as bookends for the story just completed and as bridges for the story to come. Their main role is to announce the individual stories, deliver short editorialized commentary after the stories, and foreshadow the upcoming stories. Closely aligned with the hosts, the *Hard Copy* field reporters (Diane Dimond and Doug Bruckner) are presented as part of the *Hard Copy* family.

Typically, the host presenters announce their stories by saying, "Our Diane Dimond reports. . . ." With the story baton passed to Dimond or Bruckner, the reporters' role is to investigate events in the world outside the studio and to bring the latest information exclusively to the viewer. At times, Dimond and Bruckner appear in a studio, presented as if they are consultants for the latest exclusive update on events. In such cases the studio set is separate from the main studio where hosts Nolan and Murphy reside.

Similar to the Nolan and Murphy studio set, however, the Dimond and Bruckner set includes the backdrop of television monitors and the busyness of a newsroom, all suggesting the technological capital of the *Hard Copy* program and team. This display of high-tech television production equipment as part of the studio decor implies technical competence and expertise translating to the probability that the program and team have immediate access to every corner of the world, or at the least, every corner, dark and seamy as it may be, relevant to the particular story under investigation. Such a set design suggests the larger intention of presenting the viewer with the most updated, exclusive, accurate, and important information. In first-person fiction, too, narrative intention surfaces when narrators go to great lengths to overcome potential problems with reader believability. Devices such as precise transcripts, diaries, journals, and even tape recordings are not uncommon in such fiction. With television highbrow news and its reliance on the visual component, a similar set design to that of *Hard Copy's* set is not uncommon. Peter Jennings, for example, appears nightly against a backdrop of high-tech equipment.

The structural rhythm of the individual *Hard Copy* stories not only follows a discernible pattern, but that pattern resembles the broader macrostructure of the program. Each story is introduced and foreshadowed by a short, summarized version of its core, known as the scoop. Typically, the scoop lasts from 40 to 50

seconds (see Exhibit 5). It commands the attention of the viewer through a concise presentation of the most pressing, shocking, or sensational aspect of the story. On the one hand, the scoop temporarily relieves the viewer from the tension and suspense mounting from repetitive preceding teasers, starting at the end of the previous day's program and continuing through the headlines and commercial breaks of the present program. On the other hand, the brevity of the scoop still leaves the viewer curious and involved since there is no story context or ramification provided. As an extension of the macrostructure's opening exposition, including headlines and teasers at the program's very beginning, the scoop mirrors the exposition's fragmented style and echoes its foreshadowing function.

Following the scoop, the main body of the story takes hold. It lasts approximately three to five minutes. The main body can be clearly distinguished from the scoop due to its jump back in time to provide substance and context by narrating what led up to the scoop. The body of the story therefore often heightens the implications of the scoop through a more lengthy reconstruction of prior events and occurrences. Reconstructive techniques such as interviews, visual material with voice over, and music contribute to the story's composition, often intensifying the overall effect. Interviewees render authority, authenticity, and credibility to the story, thus they are often presented as experts, eyewitnesses, or people closely connected to the main characters. The subjectivity of the interviews often reveals itself through emotional accompaniments to the statements such as voice inflections, posturing, or facial gesturing.

The visual material used in the main body of the story provides further evidence of the apparent truthfulness and trustworthiness of what is being told and shown. Shots of official documents, highbrow news footage, and undercover video material serve as proof of the authenticity of the claims made by the disembodied voice-over, again much like the strategic use of believability or credibility building

devices used in first-person narration. In *Hard Copy*, slow motion action often emphasizes the drama.

Visual material also serves the function of bringing the main characters in the story closer to the audience, thus frequent close-ups of the main characters are shown. Still photographs or home-recorded video material provide historical reference to the victims and villains in the story, so that within a matter of minutes the viewer becomes familiarized with their biographical information. In this way the viewer moves beyond the distant, faceless names of the characters in highbrow news stories and is drawn into instantaneous para-social relationships with the main characters of the tabloid story. For example, the murder of an innocent female becomes even more tragic because a once faceless victim is now transformed into a known and often appealing person. Beyond this kind of empathetic identification with the victim herself, the viewer also is prompted to identify with the grief and sorrow of the victim's family and friends. In this sense, there is seldom any confusion about which characters embody the forces of good or evil. As is often the case with television and literary fiction, characters are without ambiguity. However, when controversy dominates the story, the opposing viewpoint is accommodated in the story's main body. Here, though, the duration of the opposing viewpoint is generally brief (approximately 40 seconds), and it is also followed by the field reporter's condemning editorialization.

The story's conclusion lasts one minute (see Exhibit 5). Depending on the scoop, it can take several forms. When the scoop is unresolved and continuing, such as in the O.J. Simpson case, the viewer is left with unresolved questions which the reporter promises to answer swiftly and exclusively as soon as more information becomes available. This entices the audience to follow the course of events in future *Hard Copy* programs. In fact, stories tend to resurface, albeit with new twists or slants, as long as they remain newsworthy and topical. This is much

like the daily soap opera, movie sequel, or book chapter technique designed to attract continued viewing or reading. When the story is resolved and played out to its fullest glory, however, the conclusion centers on either the tragic or victorious elements of the event's outcome. For example, family and friends are either seen as eternally destroyed by the murder of the victim or the underdog's victory over his/her circumstances is expanded to glorious and heroic heights.

Conclusion

As a form of communication, *Hard Copy* and tabloid television generally offer structural models leading to better understanding of audience effects. Lessons to be gained from traditional practices in both fiction and news enrich interpretation of those models and effects. In our case, the positioning of *Hard Copy* along the middle ground of fiction and news helps to isolate the program within its own genre, one employing a combination of strategies and techniques intended to enliven and control the act of communication between program and viewer. We believe such an interpretation is necessary in order to open the dialogue about what is proving to be an essential component of network television programming fare.

Our study is exploratory in nature, focused exclusively on three *Hard Copy* programs aired within a tight and close time frame. As such, the study is limited generally and specifically in its confinement to three editions of one program within three blocks of compressed time. Still, the structural interpretation of those editions revealed a clear and workable model for understanding how program structure weighs on the act of communication. Consideration of fiction and news simply enriches the understanding, providing more substance to the possibilities of the usefulness of our interpretation.

With the field for dialogue about tabloid television laid open, new efforts in the direction of understanding tabloid television's role in hyperextending reality or truth, and its indebtedness to other forms of art and communication practices seem on the horizon. Further studies, both quantitative and qualitative in nature, will need to examine more representative numbers of programs, while considering new or refined contextual conditions within an expanded time frame.

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Exhibit 1: Video examples taken from tabloid programs to illustrate our tabloid typology.

Exhibit 2: A.C. Nielsen Ratings and Shares for the Philadelphia area during February 1994

Program	Metro HH (RTG)	Women 25-49 (RTG)	Metro HH (SHR)	Women 25-49 (SHR)
9:00 am				
WPVI Donahue	9.3	3.9	29.5	27.3
9:30 am				
WPVI Donahue	8.3	3.2	26.3	23.0
12:30 PM				
WCAU Young & Restless	11.2	7.2	30.0	38.7
1:00 PM				
WCAU Young & Restless	11.3	7.6	28.8	32.5
4:00 PM				
KYW Montel Williams	6.3	4.1	14.1	17.2
WPVI Oprah Winfrey	18.3	11.9	40.8	50.0
4:30 PM				
KYW Montel Williams	6.9	4.2	14.3	15.6
WCAU Rescue 911	4.4	2.2	9.0	8.1
WPVI Oprah Winfrey	21.2	14.0	43.7	52.1
5:00 PM				
KYW Inside Edition	7.2	4.4	13.3	15.5
WCAU CH 10 News	6.0	2.9	11.1	10.0
WGBS Saved by the bell	4.1	0.3	7.5	1.1
WPHL Who's the Boss?	1.6	0.6	2.9	2.1
WPVI Action News	25.9	13.3	47.9	46.6
WTXF Cosby Show	3.5	1.9	6.4	6.8
5:30 PM				
KYW Current Affair	7.7	4.9	13.2	15.4
WCAU CH 10 News	8.0	4.3	13.6	13.4
WGBS Growing Pains	3.7	0.5	6.3	1.4
WPHL Wonder Years	1.8	0.8	3.0	2.3
WPVI Action News	26.9	13.1	45.8	41.0
WTXF Cosby Show	4.6	2.6	7.7	8.1
7:00 PM				
KYW Entertainment Tonight	11.1	6.8	17.5	16.1
WCAU American Journal	5.3	2.9	8.3	6.7
WGBS Roseanne	7.6	5.7	11.9	13.4
WPHL Married Children	5.2	3.4	8.1	8.1
WPVI Jeopardy	22.9	9.8	36.1	23.1
WTXF Star Trek	6.7	5.0	10.6	11.7
7:30 PM				
KYW Hard Copy	13.6	9.4	20.5	20.1
WCAU Cops	6.9	4.5	10.4	9.7
WGBS Family Matters	7.3	5.5	10.9	11.7
WPHL Highway Patrol	3.3	2.5	4.9	5.3
WPVI Wheel Fortune	19.6	8.1	29.6	17.3
WTXF Star Trek	7.8	5.7	11.8	12.1

Exhibit 3: *Hard Copy* Macrostructure segments in minutes

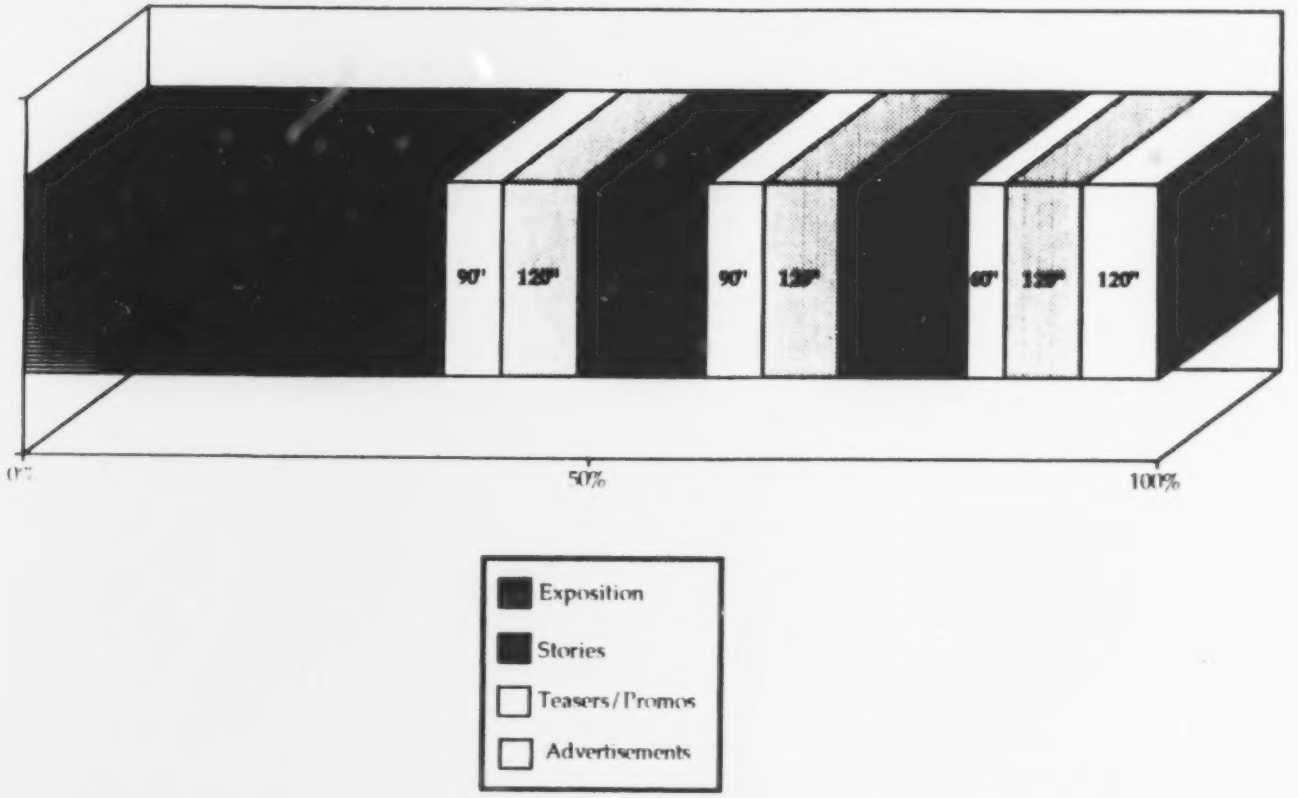


Exhibit 4: *Hard Copy* Host Macrostructure segments in minutes

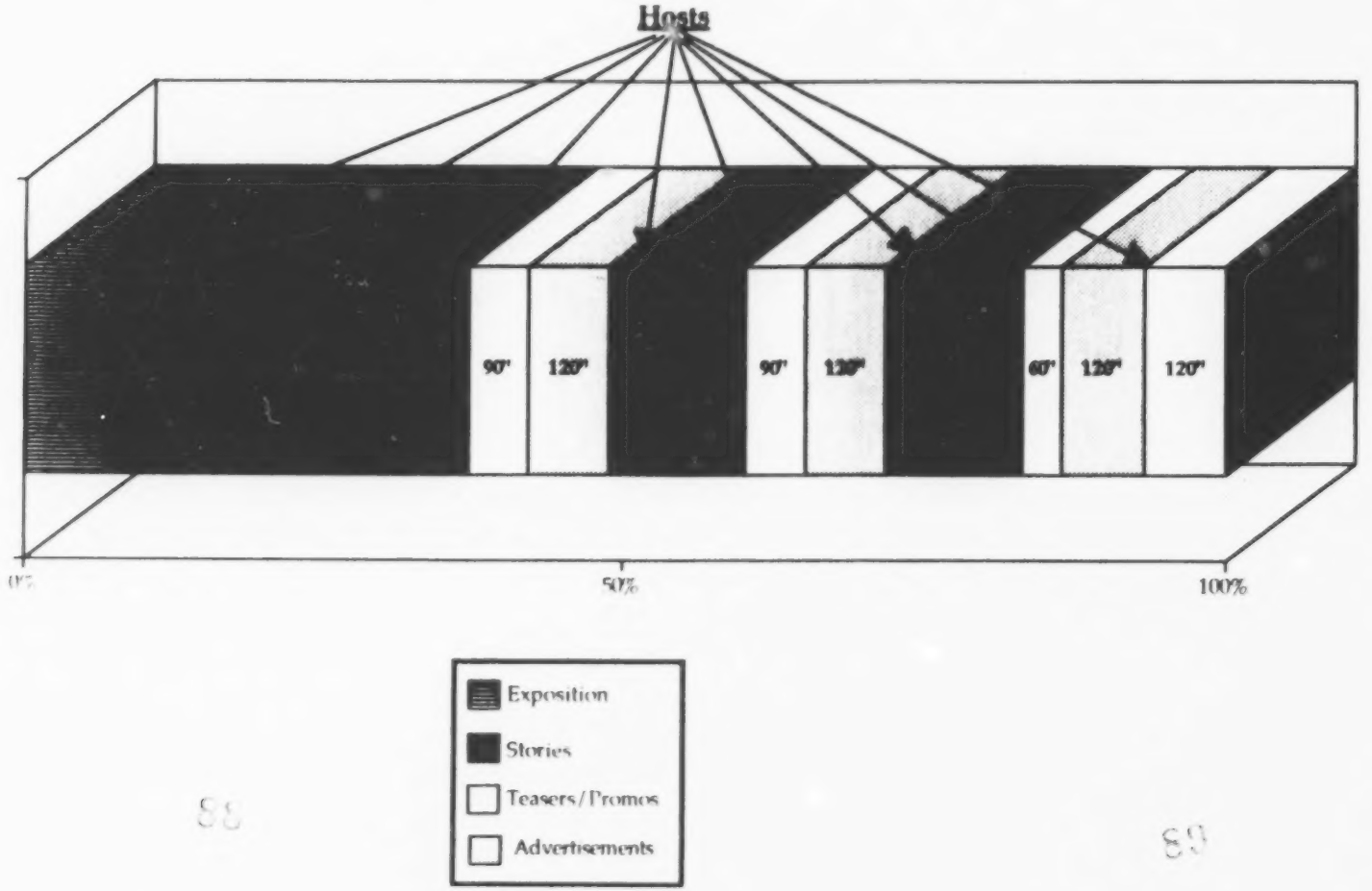
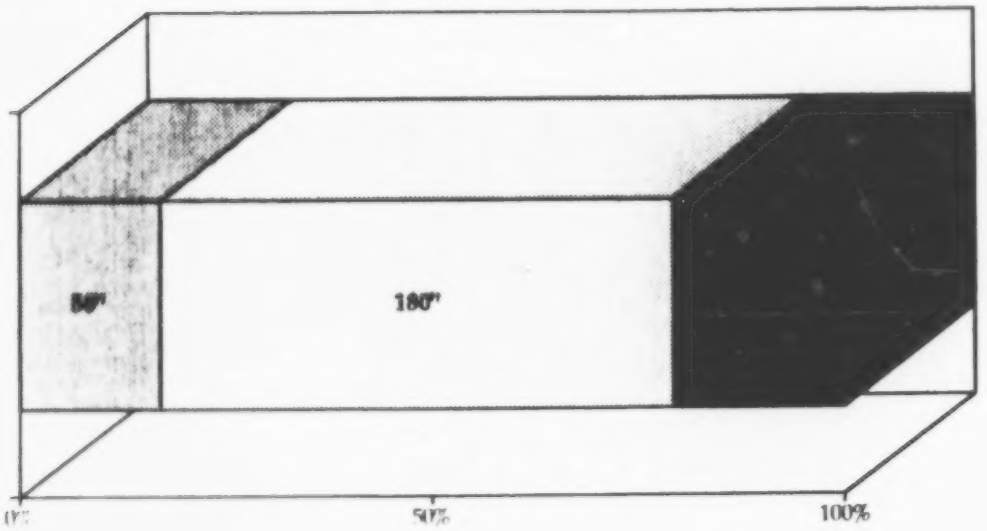


Exhibit 5: *Hard Copy* Microstructure segments in minutes



Inconvenienced Elites, Marginalized Unions and Sexual Harassment: Network Television Labor News in the Nineties

by

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Inconvenienced Elites, Marginalized Unions and Sexual Harassment: Network Television Labor News in the Nineties

Scholars who have examined news coverage of labor and unions have found a dearth of journalistic balance (Puette, 1992; Parenti, 1986; Glasgow University Media Group, 1976, 1980, 1982). According to this literature, news about labor regularly portrays management more favorably than workers, tends to describe strikes in terms of conflict rather than issues, suggests that often-corrupt unions represent workers poorly, and often frames union workers as greedy and unproductive.

This paper attempts to explain the underlying structure of five years of network television labor coverage in terms of the "enduring [journalistic] values" described by Gans (1980). It examines differences among labor coverage on ABC, CBS and NBC in terms of the distinct news cultures described in research about how journalists report crises (Nimmo and Combs, 1985; Smith, 1992). The authors will try to make theoretical sense of this in terms of the interaction among journalists' professional values, the changing structure of television news and the decline of union power.

Background

The essence of union power in collective bargaining is the threat of a strike. Labor Department statistics suggest this power has declined substantially in the last 15 years. During the average year between 1950 and 1979, there were more than 250 strikes involving more than a million workers, each lasting an average of about 20 days. In the 1980s, the annual number of strikes declined more than two-thirds to 83, the typical number of workers involved went down to about 500,000 and the mean length of work stoppages declined to about ten days. Between 1990 and 1992, the annual number of strikes shrunk by another 50 percent to 40 and the mean duration went down to five days (U.S. Department of Labor, 1992; Monthly Labor Review, 1994).

Puette (1992), summarizing earlier research, noted that news accounts covered the conflict between labor and management rather than explaining details of the disputes. A study of American network labor coverage in 1980 found corporate views represented more favorably than those of labor by 3:1 on CBS, 5:1 on NBC and nearly 7:1 on ABC. Only a small proportion of contract negotiations actually lead to strikes (about seven percent in the 1990s, according to Department of Labor statistics), but news that focuses on strikes at the expense of other contract negotiations suggests that strikes are the norm. In 1986, for example, CBS did 40 stories about union contracts and 184 about strikes.

According to Puette, the 1989 Pittston coal strike was "one of the most important labor disputes of the 20th century" (p. 117) because the management position in that strike challenged four hard-fought rights won by unions: 1) job security 2) seniority preference, 3) pensions and 4) health care for retirees. The television networks largely ignored the Pittston strike, but gave considerable attention to labor disputes over less important issues that inconvenienced the public.

Puette describes eight "lenses" through which reporters examine labor in ways that yield distorted representations (Puette, 1989, p.154, 155): (1) labor unions protect and encourage unproductive, usually fat, lazy, and insubordinate workers; (2) America is unable to compete internationally in open markets because big, powerful unions have forced the nation's employers to pay exorbitant union wages to unproductive laborers; (3) although some very poor and abused workers (particularly women and immigrants) may need to form unions to protect themselves, big international unions usually fail to represent the interests of such workers; (4) union leaders, because they do not come from the educated/cultured (privileged) classes, are more likely to be corrupted by the power they achieve than are business or political leaders; (5) unions should be volunteer societies organized and led by unpaid, unprofessional staffs of selfless workers; union dues should not be used to pay anyone's salary; (6) there was a time, long ago, when unions were necessary (when some of our older friends and relatives were in the movement), but now

things are different; employers are enlightened and would not generally try to abuse their workers. In the few cases where they might, new federal laws (Fair Labor Standards Act, the various civil rights acts, and Occupational Safety and Health Act) can provide reasonable protection against employer abuse; (7) unions institutionalize conflict. Unions came into being to solve a specific labor relations problem. They solved the problem and, instead of going away, they remain to dredge up conflict where there would otherwise be perfect harmony; and (8) all unions are the same. All unions are, therefore, accountable for the corruption or excess of any one union or union leader and share the guilt or shame.

Herman and Chomsky (1988) outlined a "propaganda" model of American journalism in which the media serve primarily to support the existing power structure. This model suggests an explanatory framework for the anti-labor news coverage described by Puette. Gans (1980) sees less propaganda intent in news work than Herman and Chomsky, but comes to similar conclusions about the values embedded in mainstream news reporting as represented by two weekly news magazines and two network television news organizations (CBS and NBC).

The "enduring values" of journalists observed by Gans supported the social order of business, of professional people and of the upper middle class. Journalists, he noted, tend not to come from working class backgrounds. The values of journalists tended in the stories he examined to uphold the legitimacy of existing social and political power and to delegitimize challenges to that power. Strikes, Gans said, are often portrayed negatively, especially if they affect the public.

Gans divided people in the news into "knowns," such as public officials and movie stars, and "unknowns," such as criminals and protesters. In the media content he examined, 31 percent of the actors were unknowns and 42 percent of those were protesters, rioters or strikers. In this last group nearly half were strikers, amounting to about four percent of all actors in all news stories. "Ordinary working-class people," he

said, "once got into the news only as strikers and victims of occupationally connected accidents" (Gans, 1980, p. 26).

Protesters for most causes were portrayed as threats to the social order, but disorder in the pursuit of racial equality received favorable coverage. The elite media, Gans discovered, sided with blacks and women attempting to enter the male social order.

The primary social value imbedded in the cited literature is the assumption that news media in a democracy should inform citizens impartially and thoroughly about public issues, including those affecting the working class. This notion is sanctified in the codes of ethics of various professional organizations for journalists, and is sometimes referred to as the social responsibility model of reporting (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, 1956). An underlying supposition of the social responsibility media model is that news media in the United States represent such a narrow range of views that an attentive media consumer cannot get a sufficient breadth of information to participate effectively in democratic self government unless journalists themselves accept the responsibility for covering the full range of viewpoints and issues.

The scholarly literature on labor assumes little difference among news organizations. If there are in fact a diversity of views in mainstream media accounts, the problems with labor coverage would be less problematic because the interested media consumer could obtain a wider range of views on labor and other subjects.

Labor research per se rarely addresses differences in coverage across news organizations. There has, however, been research about crisis coverage that finds substantial differences among the three American television networks. We shall examine two such studies in an effort to apply their findings to network coverage of labor.

Nimmo and Combs (1985) examined ABC, CBS and NBC coverage of six crisis stories broadcast between 1978 and 1982. They found that ABC tended to follow a non-technical sensationalist approach that said, in effect, "Good grief! Things are bad. They could, probably will, get worse!" (p. 183). CBS assured its audience things are not as bad

as they seemed, and made extensive use of experts to sanction its reports. NBC followed a more neutral and folksy approach, and used more filmed reports than its competition.

"For NBC the rhetorical vision thus suggests that reality is threatening but affirms that purified life will continue in spite of everything. CBS has a vision of threatening reality too, but ruling elites cope with the dangers and reaffirm that life can indeed continue. The ABC vision, too, is of a threatening reality. But why is life threatened? Because the system does not work" (p. 197).

Smith's (1992) examination of how three crises were covered in 1988 and 1989 found that ABC followed a more folksy and less strident style than the other networks, and that ABC was more accurate and provided more context than CBS or NBC. CBS approached the crises more stridently than ABC or NBC, used more government sources than its competitors and focused more on official versions of events. NBC quoted more scientists than the other networks and tended to use more neutral language than ABC or CBS.

Changes at the networks between the Nimmo and Combs and Smith studies may have modified the respective news organizations. Each network changed anchorpersons during that interval and each network went to a new owner. But some of the news culture appears to have persisted across these changes. During both time periods, for example, CBS presented more factual information and relied more on official sources. And NBC continued to be more neutral in tone than ABC or CBS. The primary intra-network changes appear to have been that CBS adopted some of the stridency that formerly characterized ABC, and ABC took on the earlier CBS trait of providing more context and background.

Research Questions

The cited literature provides a theoretical framework for anticipating how the networks would report labor in the 1990s. It predicts that labor coverage will focus primarily on strikes and give short shrift to the issues that led to those strikes. When issues

are covered in the stories, the literature suggests that upper middle class labor issues will receive substantially more attention than working class ones. When job layoffs are covered, we expected that they would more often affect white collar and professional than blue collar workers. Gans' observation that social disorder in pursuit of equal opportunity for women and minorities was favorably reported suggests that labor discrimination will receive more coverage than other kinds of labor issues.

The research on crises reporting is less predictive because the network news cultures appear to have retained only some of their characteristics across ownership and anchorperson changes. However, the ongoing CBS penchant for statistics and government sources suggests that it could be expected to report more strictly factual stories about labor than ABC or NBC. Job layoffs fall more into this category than our other coding categories, so we might expect CBS to broadcast more stories about layoffs.

If ABC has taken over the CBS role of providing the most background and context, we would expect ABC to do more coverage of labor issues than CBS or NBC. And if CBS is now the network most likely to report conflict, we would expect to see proportionally more strikes on CBS than on the other networks.

Method

The on-line Vanderbilt Television News Index was used to retrieve all abstracts of evening network news stories containing the words "labor," "strike," "employee" or "management" broadcast between January 1, 1990 and December 31, 1995. Because some 1994 stories were not yet in the database early in 1995, this draft of the paper is based on about 98 percent of the labor stories that aired during the five-year period.

Examination of abstracts and initial coding efforts revealed that all stories could be coded into five mutually exclusive categories: (1) discrimination, (2) layoffs, 3) labor issues, 4) strikes and 5) working conditions and benefits. Stories about the issue of job layoffs were coded as labor issues; those that simply described layoffs were coded as layoffs. Stories about striking baseball players and other professional athletes were

excluded on the basis of the assumption that players earning million-dollar salaries do not fit the traditional concept of labor.

The initial coding process examined stories longer than 30 seconds on the assumption that these were more likely than other stories to be correspondent-delivered news packages. Each of the authors examined and coded all five years worth of abstracts on two criteria: (a) whether the abstract was of a story about labor and (b) if so, in which of the five categories it belonged. When coders disagreed, the relevant abstract was discussed until agreement was reached. Stories of 30 seconds length and shorter were then coded by a graduate student who participated in the earlier coding by the three authors.

The data were entered into a database so that video of the correspondent-delivered stories could be ordered from the Vanderbilt Archive and so that cross tabulations could be obtained for all stories by attributes such as topic, length, date and network. Although some of the video footage was examined by the authors, the primary purpose of this paper is to categorize the coverage and examine it in terms of the theoretical literature about how labor issues are reported.

Because placement of a story in the lead newscast position is an indication of prominence roughly analogous to placement on a newspapers' front page, we took note of the topics addressed by newscast-leading stories.

Results

Between 1990 and 1995, there were 260 labor stories longer than 30 seconds, averaging two minutes and 50 seconds. Ten percent of these (N=26) were in the newscast leading position. There were 109 stories about labor 30 seconds in length or shorter, and an additional 50 stories of various lengths that mentioned labor but also covered other topics. Most stories in this last category were news summaries.

Overall, including stories of all lengths that focused exclusively on labor, 31 percent of the time was devoted to labor issues, 30 percent to working conditions and benefits, 27 percent to strikes, eight percent to discrimination and four percent to layoffs.

The total running time was 14 hours and 46 minutes, all but 32 minutes of which consisted of correspondent packages. On all three networks during the five-year period, there were 161 stories about strikes, fewer than CBS alone did in 1986 (Puette, 1992).

Figure 1

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) led evening newscasts five times and the 1993 American Airlines Thanksgiving holiday strike did so four times. The 1992 closing of a General Motors plant in Michigan led newscasts twice, as did the safety conditions at a North Carolina poultry-processing plant at which 25 workers died in a 1991 fire and the 1992 strike by the United Auto Workers against Caterpillar. No other topic was covered more than once in a newscast-leading story.

Only one of 94 stories about labor issues was about wages. There were 21 stories about labor unions, many of which focused on their declining power; 13 stories about NAFTA, 11 stories about layoffs, and 8 each about child labor and about temporary and replacement workers. Other topics were covered by two or fewer stories.

Stories about labor issues appear not to follow the predicted pattern of focusing substantially more on upper middle class labor issues than working class ones. Among the topics receiving the most coverage, only a portion of those in one category, job layoffs, addressed upper middle class issues exclusively. The majority of labor issue stories focused on issues affecting working class Americans.

Stories about working conditions and benefits focused primarily on health and health benefits (N=13), workplace safety (N=12), and pensions (N=8). The 78 stories in this category included four each about worker privacy and job training, three each about family leave and women in the workplace, and two each about child care, job-related stress, and drug testing.

Eighty correspondent packages and 81 30-second or shorter stories about strikes contained 32 stories about the United Auto Workers, including 19 about a bitter strike

against Caterpillar in 1992 which the New York Times called "one of the most important labor-management confrontations in a decade" (Hicks, 1992) and 10 about General Motors; 31 about a 1991 Greyhound work stoppage in which striking bus drivers permanently lost their jobs, 26 about airlines, including 17 about a 1993 strike by American Airlines flight attendants that threatened Thanksgiving travel plans; 18 about railroad strikes in 1991 and 1992, and 8 about a teamster's trucking strike in 1994. There was one correspondent package and two anchor-delivered stories about the Pittston coal strike that Puette (1992) called "one of the most important labor disputes of the 20th century" (p. 117). Sixty-eight percent of the total time in strike stories was devoted to the transportation industry and 22 percent to work stoppages by the United Auto Workers.

The anticipated focus on strikes themselves and their impact on the public rather than the labor issues that caused the strikes characterizes evening television news coverage in the 1990s. There were numerous stories about the kinds of issues that lead to strikes (replacement workers, pensions and job security, for example), but these stories were rarely tied to specific strikes.

Contrary to expectation, stories that focused on labor issues, working conditions and benefits received more than twice as much time as stories about strikes. There were a larger number of stories about strikes (N=161) than any other topic, but half of these were 30 seconds or shorter. Seventy-four percent of all 30-second-or-less stories in the five coding categories were about strikes.

Stories about strikes that inconvenienced the public (airline and railroad work stoppages, for example) or that involved violence or the threat of violence (the Greyhound, Caterpillar and Teamsters' strikes) received substantially more attention than stories that did not have public impact or carry the threat of violence. For example, there were 17 stories about a five-day strike of white collar flight attendants, but only four stories about a strike of blue-collar machinists at Eastern Airlines that started in 1989 and lasted until Eastern halted operations in 1991.

There were 13 corespondent packages about the (American Airlines) strike that inconvenienced the public affluent enough to travel by air, a group that presumably includes many in the upper middle class, four of which were in the newscast-leading position; and 12 correspondent packages about the most violent strike (Greyhound), including one that led a newscast; but only one correspondent package, 10 minutes into a newscast, among 14 stories about the many teachers' strikes that closed public schools and inconvenienced the working class mothers who pay substantial portions of their incomes for child care. There were seven anchor-delivered stories about strikes at public schools and six stories that included teachers' strikes in news summaries.

Stories about workplace discrimination focused primarily on sex discrimination (N=6) and sexual harassment (N=10). There were three stories about affirmative action, two about sexual preference and one about age discrimination. Four of the six stories about sex discrimination aired before the October 1991 confirmation hearings of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, in which Thomas' former employee Anita Hill accused him of sexual harassment. There were no stories about sexual harassment before the Thomas hearings and ten stories on that topic afterwards, excluding stories that focused specifically on Anita Hill.

Coverage of worker layoffs did not follow the predicted pattern of focusing on white collar and professional workers at the expense of their blue collar counterparts. There were two stories about layoffs at Sears and one about layoffs at K-Mart; one each about layoffs at IBM, at financial firm Shearson Lehman Hutton and at Pan Am Airlines. There were four stories about layoffs of auto workers at General Motors and two that addressed layoffs in aircraft manufacturing.

As predicted, CBS devoted more time to stories about layoffs and did a larger number of stories about layoffs than the other networks. The data do not, however, support the predictions that CBS would devote more coverage to strikes or that ABC would

produce more coverage of labor issues. CBS, in fact, devoted the least time to strikes. And the networks were virtually tied in the amount of coverage devoted to labor issues.

Figure 2

Assuming that each network broadcast 22 minutes of news most evenings, there were more than 5,000 evening network newscasts during the study period constituting nearly 2,000 hours of coverage. All categories of labor stories combined equaled about three-fourths of one percent of the five-year evening network news hole.

Discussion

Television reporting about labor in the 1990s focused far less on strikes than we expected. Over the five-year period that started in 1990, the three networks combined aired fewer stories about strikes (161) than the 184 stories about strikes on CBS alone in 1986 (Puette, 1992). By this standard, strike coverage on evening newscasts has shrunk about tenfold while the actual number of work stoppages (in organizations of 1,000 employees or more) dropped by half from about 80 a year in the 1980s to about 40 a year in the 1990s. Although there would have been more strike stories in our story population if we had included coverage of the 1994 baseball strike, we believe that our figures are comparable to 1986 because there was not a baseball strike then.

Examination of Gans' figures about strike news in the 1970s leads to a similar conclusion. Assuming that actors in the news are somewhat evenly distributed across story types, coverage has shrunk tenfold from the four percent of stories in Gans sample in which strikers were the main actors to four-tenths of one percent of all stories in the 1990s that describe strikes and strikers.

Labor issues, working conditions and job benefits received considerably more coverage than we anticipated. Wages, a traditional concern of organized labor, were dwarfed as an issue compared to the power of unions, layoffs, safety, pensions, NAFTA,

child labor, replacement workers and discrimination. Perhaps because Anita Hill legitimized sexual harassment as a news topic, there were many more stories about gender-based than racially-based discrimination, a substantial change from the results reported in earlier studies of labor coverage.

The distribution alone of stories about various labor topics does not allow examination of the various "lenses" described by Puette that distort coverage. This distribution does, however, enable us to examine qualitative observations made by Puette and other labor scholars, and permits us to investigate the application of some of the journalistic values described by Gans and others who proscribe reporting in ways that support the existing distribution of power and marginalize threats to that power.

Although there was less coverage of strikes and more coverage of labor issues than we expected, the distribution and prominence of various types of labor stories in some ways follows the kinds of patterns described by Parenti, Puette and the Glasgow Media Group; and supports observations by Gans, Gitlin (1980), Herman and Chomsky and others who have argued that news accounts tend to support the existing power structure and the values of corporations and elites.

One example of this is stories about workplace safety. According to the National Safety Council, more than a quarter of a million workers have died in job-related accidents since 1970, at an average rate of more than 10,000 a year (Lewis, 1991; Tuller, 1990; Waldman, 1989). In 1991, when 25 workers died in a fire at a North Carolina poultry processing plant because of inadequate and locked fire exits, the deaths and failed safety precautions were the subject of two correspondent packages. When the Thanksgiving holiday plans of presumably more affluent and elite Americans were threatened in 1993 by a strike by white collar flight attendants in which nobody died or was injured, the story merited five correspondent packages. The inconvenience of airline passengers is therefore more newsworthy than safety infractions that threaten the lives of workers at the bottom of the wage scale.

Another example that supports Gans "enduring values" and the "propaganda" media model described by Herman and Chomsky can be found by comparing stories about transportation strikes in the airline, railroad and trucking industry that challenge the existing social order to strikes in canneries and in the hotel and mining industry that pose smaller threats to the power elite. The former receive substantial and prominent coverage while the latter are described briefly or overlooked.

Stories about working conditions and benefits also tend more often to address the concerns of the upper middle class or matters that concern both blue collar and white collar workers, such as health benefits, pensions, privacy, job stress and safety rather than working-class concerns such as child care, the working conditions in sweatshops and among migrant laborers or on-the-job training.

Stories about on-the-job discrimination focus more often on cases of affluent female workers being harassed sexually than on factory workers being denied opportunities because of their gender, and more often on gender than on racial discrimination. This pattern also supports the values of the affluent and powerful at the expense of those who have neither power nor affluence.

However, the power elite do not have monolithic access to television news organizations with regard to labor coverage. Most of the topics covered specifically as labor issues rather than working conditions, job benefits or discrimination favor the concerns of the working class rather than middle class or professional employees. In this same spirit, there was virtually no television coverage of two major newspaper strikes that occurred during the study period, one in New York City and the other in Pittsburgh. If journalists were interested only in labor issues that affect professional and middle-class Americans, we would have expected these strikes to receive considerably more attention.

Labor representatives who seek television coverage appear to have several possible approaches that resonate with the characteristics that network news organizations find newsworthy. The surest way to attract attention is to act or threaten to act in a way that

substantially inconveniences the affluent, educated and powerful segments of society. Another successful approach would be to perform a work stoppage in which there was violence or at least the threat of violence against management or against workers who cross picket lines. A third and sometimes successful technique is to raise workplace issues that affect upper middle class and professional workers. Finally, the more powerful labor unions, such as the United Auto Workers, seem to have a considerably better chance of receiving media attention than smaller and less powerful groups such as the United Mine workers or non-unionized workers with equally legitimate grievances.

Television coverage of labor in the 1990s appears not to be as polarized or distorted as Puette, Gans and other scholars have suggested. But it does tend to legitimize the existing distribution of political power and to marginalize the work-related concerns of those at the bottom of the power structure. The coverage examined here suggests that the concerns and needs of the upper middle class, professionals, and managers are portrayed as considerably more important and legitimate than the concerns and needs of working-class Americans.

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Figure 1

Distribution of Evening Network Labor Stories in the 1990s by Time in Five Categories

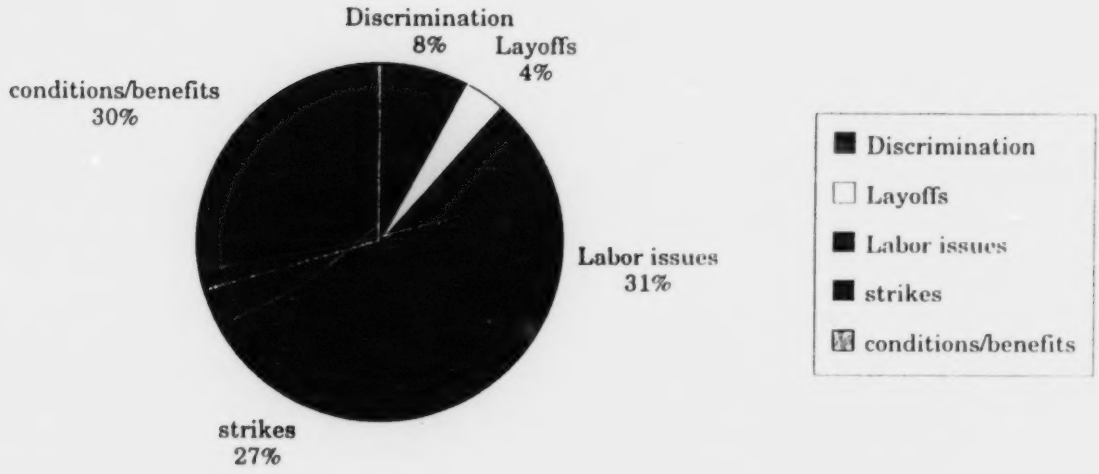
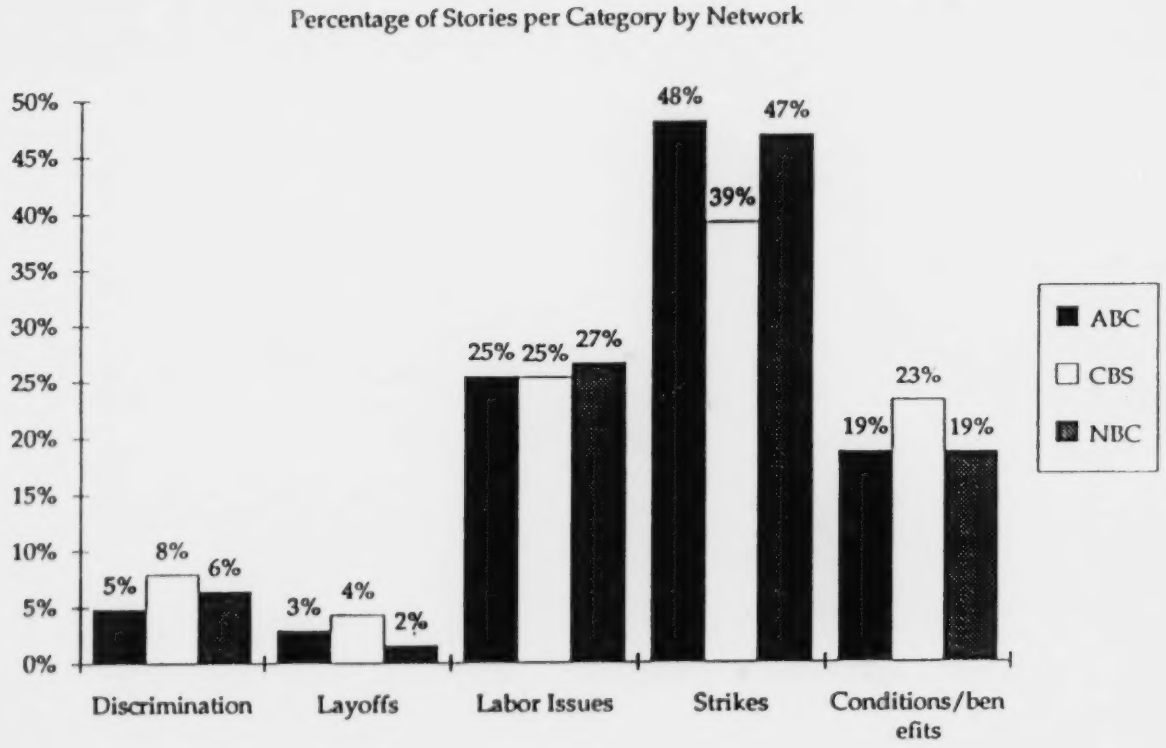


Figure 2


Percentage of Stories per Category by Network
50%
45%
40%
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
5%
8%
6%
3%
4%
2%
25%
25%
27%
48%
39%
47%
19%
23%
19%
Discrimination
Layoffs
Labor Issues
Strikes
Conditions/ben efits
ABC
CBS
NBC

Outreach to TV News Viewers: "Interactivity" and "Choice"

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Outreach to TV News Viewers: "Interactivity" and "Choice"

Many commercial television stations in the United States have begun working to provide news viewers with forms of "interactivity" or "choice." These terms generally are used to imply a new degree of audience influence over discrete news decisions or at least the available news menu. Indeed, they are linked to forms of communication which together suggest the possibility of a radically new perspective on the station-viewer relationship.

If broadly implemented--and implementation is spreading--this complex of paths and techniques could affect a power balance which has underlain broadcasting from its start. The traditional "exchange" in which viewers simply have swapped their attention for information (McManus, 1994) could be altered forever.

The prospect of full TV interactivity, permitting audiences to probe, expand or criticize news reports through remote control devices (RCDs) or computer links, has been widely publicized; yet so far enabling technologies remain unavailable in many cities. Some stations are attempting to exploit potential demand through a kind of lower-tech interactivity. This includes new paths for comments and requests from viewers. In some cases, it even includes letting news viewers shape what stations put on the air.

Quasi-interactivity devices include polls, focus groups, mail surveys, telephone lines and E-mail. Offerings of "choice" include the opportunity to vote on news stories to be aired, as well as alternative newscasts a station may place on a second channel.

Some forecasters believe--however radical the notion in light of broadcast history--that viewers must become active partners if stations are to retain long-term audience loyalty. This study is an initial effort to discover to what degree such ideas are being translated into action.

BACKGROUND

Less than a quarter-century ago Leroy and Sterling (1973) declared that "individuals have little substantive power to influence the mass news

system". A decade later, investigators of news content such as Carroll (1985) still depicted news decisions as station-based with little direct viewer input.

Recent analyses of the social effects of television, such as those of Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi (1990), have continued to frame the programmer-audience relationship as a hands-off affair in which viewers have little real power.

However, some forecasters posit a future in which the individual viewer will *rule*. Brandon Tartikoff (1994), a highly successful network programmer, predicts a "democracy of choice, not a tyranny of choice like before. You will choose what you want to watch, when you want to watch". An experienced consultant sees "an ongoing desire on the part of viewers for choice, and a desire to control television to fit their needs--not to be controlled by television" (Standish, 1994).

Viewer power was born when A. C. Nielsen began measuring audiences soon after television was introduced in 1948 (Buzzard, 1990). The goal of such measurement was, and has been since, to increase broadcasters' success by clarifying audience desires. Embedded in that, inevitably, has been increasing influence for viewers (or at least their program choices) with every turn of the technological screw--right up to passive program-choice measurement tied to electronic devices embedded in viewers' jewelry (Burgi, 1994).[1]

Conceptually, "interactivity" aims to remove the researcher as middle man. Because it increases viewers' direct contact with stations, it is highly promotable to audiences. But very few U.S. households have access to advanced technological interactivity with television--requiring installation of fiber-optic connections--even though many industry executives predicted it would be in 10 percent of homes by the mid-1990s (Mitchell, 1991).[2]

The most widely publicized U.S. interactive-TV project, in Orlando, Fla., has suffered technical delays and holds uncertain business prospects for Time Warner (Dempsey, 1994).[3] Access to bandwidth remains a serious and perhaps long-term obstacle to extensive broadcast interactivity (Stern, 1995).

This appears to frustrate demand which has been supported by polling data, mostly through industry-funded studies. In a 1993 survey by a technology firm, 71 percent of respondents said they would use full interactivity, if available, to comment to stations on news coverage

(Clawson, 1993). Relatively affluent consumers in three cities targeted for testing of interactive-TV tests said they would use it more for news than to do home shopping (*The Plain Dealer,* 1994).

Meanwhile, quasi-interactivity has developed. As far back as 1982, a Connecticut cable news program was billed as "interactive" because its 200-household audience was encouraged to phone in story ideas (*New York Times,* 1982). CBS in 1992 invited viewers onto a toll-free phone line to critique President Bush's State of the Union address (*Chicago Tribune,* 1992). CBS in 1994 let viewers "vote"--call in their opinions--on aspects of the O.J. Simpson double-murder case (*St. Petersburg Times,* 1994).

Electronic mail, while limited to computer-equipped viewers, provides an ever-widening opening to audiences. All three network affiliates in Indianapolis now use it (Garmel, 1994). A Portland, Oregon producer sees demographic benefits in his station's new E-mail accessibility through the service America Online: "Consider who is on the other end of the line. People with home computer systems and modems are part of a very desirable audience." (Ray, 1994).

At the end of March 1995, the Radio-Television News Directors Association listed 18 stations which had created "home pages" on the Internet's "World Wide Web" (RTNDA, 1995). These are entrance gates to constantly updated information on a station's programming and personnel--frequently including reporters' E-mail addresses. WCVB in Boston, one of the country's larger news operations, now solicits story ideas through E-mail (Bickelhaupt, 1995).

Direct viewer influence even has extended--albeit in sharply limited experiments--to story selection. In 1990 Cable News Network tried regularly announcing one newscast's offerings, then inviting viewers to use a 900 phone number to vote on stories they wished to see in full (Hanson, 1991). This model evidently influenced WSJV in Elkhart (South Bend market), Indiana. It now promotes features, then lets viewers vote over a toll-free telephone line and broadcasts only the winning stories.[4] WGGB-TV in Springfield, Massachusetts lets viewers vote all afternoon on 5 p.m. stories (Hosbein, 1995).

Emphasizing choice over interactivity, WCCO-TV in Minneapolis broadcasts not one but *two* 10 p.m. news programs; they differ in style and content, and RCD-equipped viewers are urged to graze between them

(Upshaw, 1994). During tests of the newscasts, then news director John Lansing (1994) cited delays in full interactivity--and concern for audience loyalty--and said: "We decided it would be smart not to wait for the technology".

The need to hold loyalty in a dense, fragmented market has begun impelling stations to create conceptual two-way streets to viewers. The rate and extent to which stations nationally are moving in this direction must be gauged to establish whether a broad and authentically new movement is under way.

Whether either the viewer or the broadcaster is ready for true and profound change has been debatable. The author expected (not at the level of hypothesis) that many news directors would confess to seeking *promotional value* and *ratings* from their projects; but that--in the spirit of American business--only a minority would say they intend to grant viewers true *control* over television news.

METHOD

Anecdotal accounts of news-station innovations--including many accomplished without new technology--directed this study toward a preliminary and exploratory mapping of the field. The mail survey supporting it would have to catch busy news executives' attention, hold that attention by asking clear and pertinent questions, and elicit simple and direct responses.

No single ideal survey length is known to exist. Dillman (1978) concluded that questionnaires longer than 12 pages run the risk of diminished response. Yammarino, Skinner and Childers (1991) discovered response rates dropping in surveys exceeding four pages. Eschewing generalizations, Fowler (1984) declares: "The extent to which the length of a self-administered questionnaire affects costs and response rates varies with the population being studied and the topic".

The author's experience in a previous study, as well as in television news itself, suggested that when feasible, a dramatically brief questionnaire could elicit a high response from news personnel[5]. Consequently, a one-page questionnaire was designed to require literally 90 seconds to complete. The form was entitled "Minute-Thirty Survey"--and was headed with a

note relating that title to the approximate length of the lead story in a newscast, to emphasize the meager time needed for completion.

The form was divided into two sections. In the first, the respondent was to place check marks beside all methods used by that station "to give viewers a sense of choice or interactivity in news coverage." (The phrase "a sense of" was included purposefully, to elicit reponses even from introspective executives who might consider their outreach more promotional than substantive.)

As "interactivity" methods the survey listed E-mail, 800 or other phone numbers, on-air viewer forums, off-air focus groups, and mail surveys. "Choice" options (not providing viewer-input mechanisms) were alternative newscasts on other over-the-air stations, and alternative newscasts on cable.

A second section asked the respondent to indicate all specific purposes for which such methods were being used. Options listed: "get news tips", "promote station image", "run news/opinion polls', "let viewers pick stories", "set coverage agenda", "expand news choices", "give viewers control", "use news staff better", "increase gross ratings" and "improve demographics".

These possible purposes of choice/interactivity techniques were selected to stimulate rather subtle responses. It was hoped, for example, that ratings and demographics would retain their distinctness from each other as audience measurement values. Also of interest was the degree to which news directors would discriminate between expanding viewers' choices and giving them *control*.

The survey was pre-tested on news directors in Portland and Eugene, Oregon. They reacted positively to its content and its "minute-thirty" brevity; several offered minor clarifications of wording.

Forms were mailed in December 1994 to news directors of 650 network-affiliated and independent U.S. stations. These individuals were identified through lists published in Broadcasting & Cable Yearbook, the directory of the National Association of Television Program Executives, and rosters of news directors of ABC, CBS and NBC affiliates obtained from network or station executives. (Some inaccuracies due to recent job shifts were anticipated.)

Stamped return envelopes were provided. News directors were asked to note their station call letters on the questionnaires, but the call letters were not to be published. Nor were respondents asked to sign the forms; confidentiality was guaranteed,[6] and what ensued was anonymity for participants who chose to supply neither their names nor their call letters.

After a second mailing and a round of telephone reminders, responses totaled 291, a return rate of 45 percent.

RESULTS: ADOPTION

Response frequencies make clear that call-in phone lines to which viewers are directed, as well as electronic mail, top the popularity charts among TV news directors who seek to provide "interactivity" or "choice". More than 70% of stations are using these links or plan to do so. (The only other outreach method embraced by at least a simple majority was off-air focus groups, used or planned by 52.6% of stations.)

Seventy percent of respondents (206) reported the use of of 800, 900 or other lines as communication routes from the consumer.**(Table 1)** Another 19 stations (6.5%) indicated they will begin using such phone lines soon. Only 66 stations (22.7%) said they neither provide nor soon will provide such service to viewers.

More than one-third of respondents--106 (36.4%)--said their stations were using E-mail (which requires that home users have computers with modems). Almost as many stations--104 (35.7%)--reported they plan to launch viewer E-mail or provide Internet access soon. Taken together, these two categories represent the most direct route to newsrooms currently available to the public.

The third most popular outreach method was off-air focus groups, with 119 stations (40.9%) reportedly using them to determine audience wishes and another 34 (11.7%) expecting to do so soon.

Of the methods surveyed, least popular were alternative newscasts. Only 53 stations (18.2%) reported placing or planning to place newscasts on other over-the-air channels. Cable was more popular: 90 stations (30.9%) said they place or soon will place alternative newscasts on cable.

Beyond the listed options, 41 respondents (14.1%) said they now or soon will employ other viewer-outreach techniques. These included exchanging information via "fax"; entering on-line talk forums via

CompuServe, America Online or similar services; setting up live viewer call-ins during news programs; use of station "voicemail" to route, receive and store messages; encouraging viewers to send in videotape; phone banks to answer questions about stories; simultaneous airing of TV newscasts on AM radio; elaborating on stories through mailings in self-addressed envelopes sent in by viewers, and telephone surveys.[7]

RESULTS: PURPOSES

To *promote station image* was identified by many respondents as a major purpose of several choice/interactivity methods. E-mail and this purpose were aligned significantly **(Table 2)**--reflecting the promotional value of networking with viewers via computer.[8]

Promotion potential also motivates stations to program alternative newscasts on other over-air outlets and on cable. **(Table 3)** Such programs supply viewers with "choice" but not "interactivity". Broadcasters who promote these second newscasts extensively may transfer brand appeal to the alternative outlets without losing loyalty to the "home" stations.

E-mail and Internet access for viewers, while separate from the act of viewing, are considered to serve the purpose of *increasing gross ratings* for newscasts. **(Table 4)**

News directors evidently have found strong utility in telephone and E-mail for *getting news tips.* That was in fact the most frequently cited purpose of the two forms of technological communication link: 198 (68%) of respondents said they use viewer phone lines to receive story ideas, while 145 (49.8%) do so with E-mail. **(Table 5)**

Yet in strong contrast to use of E-mail as a viewer communication path stands the prevailing attitude of news directors that the purpose is <u>not</u> to *give viewers control.* The contrary appears to be true of all methods, in some cases to a statistically significant degree[9] **(Table 6)**

Summarizing chi-square analysis: Stations report that they institute E-mail or Internet access as a way to let viewers comment, as a promotable service and as a means of increasing ratings. These outreach methods also bring in news tips, which both aid efficiency and heighten viewer engagement with the news process.

However, results support the expectation that news directors would <u>not</u> agree that they are turning the reins over to audiences. The emphasis

on promotion--and use of "choice" methods like alternative newscasts for promotional purposes--appears instead to support the traditional role of broadcasters: experimenting with programs, and promoting them, until viewers approve.

DISCUSSION

That local television news is shifting to meet new audience demands and competitive pressures is supported by this preliminary and exploratory study. While changes are heavily promotion-oriented, there has been real movement toward opening lines to viewers. Stations which once might have relied only on research consultants to canvass audiences and help adjust programming have begun meeting the viewers head-on.

Roughly three-quarters of news directors responding to the study now dedicate or plan to dedicate phone lines or electronic mail to viewer input. The process of phone-line adoption mostly is complete, but adoption of E-mail or Internet access is only halfway along, with about as many planning it as already are using it.

More than half of the respondents use or plan to use off-air focus groups to obtain viewer comment on news programming. More than 40 percent of stations put viewers on the air in forums or soon will; this not only acquires but displays viewer comment on current or ongoing news topics or practices and thus stimulates wider audience engagement with news programming. More than one-quarter of responding stations employ or will employ mail surveys--a venerable and well understood research tool--to gauge news-viewer opinion.

This outreach fits neatly with evidence that audiences have become active through their remote control devices: One study found some viewers channel-flipping at rates nearing 400 times an hour (Ferguson, 1994). And while network-affiliated stations remain attractive even in markets with many alternatives via cable (Cooper, 1993), competition is drawing some viewers away from traditional news sources.

This could partly explain the limited trend toward alternative newscasts. These remain rare on over-the-air channels, and even more rarely used as simultaneous options for RCD-armed viewers as in the WCCO-TV model.[10] However, alternative newscasts on "foreign" outlets extend the reach of a station's promotion and advertising and can tap

special tastes; Wicks (1989) identified discrete segments of TV-news audiences which followed unique news preferences. Some programmers will serve "niche" audiences through alternative newscasts, and future research should document their strategies and progress.

Ratings continue to motivate TV executives; while not always statistically significant, between 30 and 45 percent of respondents associated the purpose *"increase gross ratings"* with every outreach option offered in this survey.

That stations are adopting "choice" and low-tech "interactivity" for news viewers could reflect both the promise and the peril confronting local television news. The 1990s appear to have brought a shift in audience interest from larger national issues back to community concerns (Peirce, 1991). But viewer loyalty is less reliable than in the past and--as always in this branch of an entertainment medium--viewer tastes confound some news managers: "We do something you consider serious, they tune out," complained one (Hill, 1993).

Moreover, with new corporate owners redrawing priorities and network affiliations destabilized in many markets, some executives now invest more in cost-cutting efficiency than in quality of news coverage (McMullen, Fletcher, Hamilton & Ross, 1994). To weed out unnecessary news expenditures by permitting viewers to influence and even prune coverage agendas is, undeniably, a step toward efficiency whatever its journalistic effects.

Ventures in TV-news "choice" and "interactivity" proceed amid contradictory signs. One industry poll found 68 percent of respondents interested in choosing stories on a customized television news channel (Chilton, 1993); at the other pole lie failed interactivity market tests and one researcher's conviction that, despite all, most television viewers are "pretty passive and quite content to have the programs fed to them" (Eckhouse, 1993).

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The conquest of technological barriers to station-viewer communication is a potentially rich field of inquiry. The author recommends early research into precisely how television stations use their "interactivity" and "outreach" techniques.

For example, if telephone and computer links appear relatively straightforward in application, what about "on-air viewer forums" and "off-air focus groups": Are they defined and employed differently from market to market, sometimes openly contributing to news coverage, sometimes rather furtively engineering it? This study indicates that while focus groups are used predominantly to improve ratings and demographics, "set news agenda" also is a frequent purpose.

Future studies should assess how viewer-link technology benefits stations using it interchangeably for news-tip acquisition and image promotion; certainly some efforts by stations to "bond" with their communities have seemed more crass than substantive.

Inquiry into use of viewer links also could reveal utilization rates across geographic and market-size categories; such data could be correlated with home-computer adoption, education, and patterns of media use in those locales. One can imagine settings in which television newscasts might be little more than attractive surfaces under which more complex forms and levels of communication are developed to draw in previously silent constituencies.

How stations compile and interpret the communications they receive from viewers is of interest, as is the emergence of audience issues peculiar to each TV market. Research should pinpoint the characteristics of active viewers--as opposed to those who never make their views known--and of what they contribute. (One intriguing thread: Are E-mail "news tips" really turning into stories? Do viewers develop sophistication in developing marketable tips? Are some viewers--and the interest groups they represent--becoming regular news agenda-setters?)

Whether and how journalists accept and exploit interactivity with their publics should be investigated. One of the most important long-range objectives is to gauge the impact of the newer outreach techniques on news agendas, routines and styles--in effect, on how journalism is defined.

CONCLUSION

The "choice" and "interactivity" highlighted in this study appear to represent an industry conviction--remarkable, if real--that viewers must be drawn in, at least as advisors, if local news is to extend its commercial success.

Pessimists might argue that such moves amount to no more than cynical substitutes for broadcast journalism serious enough to be innately responsive to public needs. Optimists might counter that the public interest is sure to regain lost status as viewers send their opinions flowing through new pipelines into the minds of broadcasters.

At a minimum, the new station-viewer links seem to signify a historical pause in television's development. In this communications interregnum, news programmers do what they can to engage viewers while awaiting technologies many hope will bring full interactivity.

Merely to comment from a home computer, veto stories over a phone line, seek a station's alternative news menus through the RCD--these might seem primitive when viewed in retrospect from a truly interactive age.

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[1] The distinction between viewers and their program choices, as measured by Nielsen and other firms, is not a trivial one. The major complaint against audience research has been that its inherent inaccuracies are used by broadcasters--without direct viewer participation--in ways that distort viewers' will, sometimes bizarrely. Prominent network researcher David Poltrack (1992) has conceded this.

[2] Such is not the case in Canada. Videoway, a home system by which consumers can tailor TV news presentations, has been successful in Montreal since the late 1980s and now is being expanded to other countries (Culf, 1994).

[3] The company remains optimistic publicly and pledges to expand its service, permitting viewers to "zap" through commercials and watch only the news they wish (Berniker, 1995).

[4] The call-ins, not insignificantly, also facilitate instant demographic interviews which can prove useful in selling advertising time. (Hosbein, 1994)

[5] The author in 1993 asked 36 TV news directors for permission to send an attitudinal survey to their employees. Those who asked received previews of the 65-ques tion survey. Eighteen news directors (50%) rejected the project. Some clearly were uncomfortable with its job-satisfaction aspects; some cited fear of exposure or corporate uncertainties; most said simply that neither they nor their employees had time to help. "Things are just too hectic," said a news director in Chicago; "I must get five or six of those a month" (Philadelphia); "We get so many of these...they take so much time" (Fort Myers, Florida). The 18 newsrooms in which the survey was accepted yielded only a 15 percent response rate. Hence the decision to limit the current study--which also treats less controversial topics--to a single dense page of questions.

[6] The aim of confidentiality was to elicit candor from news directors in their reports not only of current but of *planned* projects. The author reasoned that, otherwise, competitive concerns leading to fear of exposure might discourage full response.

[7] Some news directors listed under "other" a number of outreach methods which could have fit within listed categories. These included call-in segments during newscasts ("800, 900 or other phone line") and on-line service, computer bulletin boards, and forums with Compuserve or AOL ("E-mail or Internet access to station"). To find these listed under "other" suggests either question ambiguity, eagerness of respondents to provide distinguishing details, or both.

[8] Crosstabs were run between each method and each purpose. No relationships other than those noted in "Results" and in tables achieved statistical significance.

[9] The purpose "give viewers control" significantly repelled programmers of alternative newscasts. So did most other purposes among programmers of alternative newscasts on over-air channels.

[10] A risk in inviting viewers to use their RCDs to reach a station's alternative newscast is that they will "zap" right past it to a competitor's channel. Such was a rival news director's hope when WCCO began its "News of your Choice" with a test run in late summer 1994: "Whenever you ask people to change channels, they may not go where you want them to; they might stop on us" (Mason, 1994). The rival station, KARE-TV, began a counter-promotion campaign to woo WCCO viewers in mid-zap.

TABLE 1
Station adoption of "choice"/"interactivity" for TV-news viewers
(n=291)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Use now	106	206	16	51	98	119	69
	(36.4%)	*(70.8%)*	*(5.4%)*	*(17.5%)*	*(33.7%)*	*(40.9%)*	*(23.7%)*
Plan to	104	19	37	39	25	34	11
	(35.7%)	*(6.5%)*	*(12.7%)*	*(13.4%)*	*(8%)*	*(11.7%)*	*(3.8%)*
N/A	81	66	238	201	168	138	211
	(27.8%)	*(22.7%)*	*(81.8%)*	*(69.1%)*	*(57.7%)*	*(47.4%)*	*(72.5%)*

Method 1: E-mail/Internet
Method 2: Viewer phone lines
Method 3: Alternative newscast (2nd over-air channel)
Method 4: Alternative newscast (cable)
Method 5: On-air viewer forums
Method 6: Off-air focus groups
Method 7: Mail surveys

TABLE 2

"Promote station image" as purpose of E-mail
(n=210)

	1	2
Is purpose	48 *(22.8%)*	82 *(39%)*
Is not purpose	56 *(26.6%)*	24 *(11.4%)*

Chi-square=21.67, df=1, p=<.00000
1 = Plan to adopt E-mail soon
2 = Currently use E-mail

TABLE 3

"Promote station image" as purpose of alternative newscast (on cable)

(n=90)

	1	2
Is purpose	20 *(22.2%)*	37 *(41.1%)*
Is not purpose	19 *(21.1%)*	14 *(15.5%)*

Chi-square=4.30, df=1, p=<.03802
1=Plan to begin alternative newscast soon
2=Currently produce alternative newscast

TABLE 4

"Increase gross ratings" as purpose of E-mail

(n=210)

	1	2
Is purpose	24 *(11.4%)*	43 *(20.4%)*
Is not purpose	80 *(38%)*	63 *(30%)*

Chi-square=7.39, df=1, p=<.0[illegible]056
1=Plan to adopt E-mail soon
2=Currently use E-mail

TABLE 5

"Get news tips" as purpose of E-mail

(n=210)

	1	2
Is purpose	59 *(28%)*	86 *(40.9%)*
Is not purpose	45 *(21.4%)*	20 *(9.5%)*

Chi-square=14.62, df=1, p=<.00013
1=Plan to adopt E-mail soon
2=Currently use E-mail

TABLE 6

"Give viewers control" as purpose of E-mail
(n=210)

	1	2
Is purpose	20 *(9.5%)*	43 *(20.4%)*
Is not purpose	84 *(40%)*	63 *(30%)*

Chi-square=11.37, df=1, p=<.00074
1=Plan to adopt E-mail soon
2=Currently use E-mail

Radio and Television Call-in Shows and Their Impact on the Public in the 1992 Presidential Campaign

by

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Media scholars and political pundits have had a lot to say about the emergence of talk shows as a campaign forum during the 1992 presidential race. From candidate Bill Clinton's oft-cited saxophone-playing appearance on the "Arsenio Hall Show," to Ross Perot announcing his candidacy on "Larry King Live," presidential contenders took to the airwaves and cable lines like never before. "More than any other presidential campaign, the candidates have been able to talk directly to the voters through the talk show and interview show formats and they have been able to answer questions directly from the public," reported one study. "Jennings, Rather and Brokaw have been transmogrified into the 'old news' or 'old media'," concluded another assessment. That these new media represented a departure from the traditional use of mass media in a presidential campaign is not being contested; the actual effects of talk-show stumping upon the average voter, however, are much more uncertain.

The campaign of 1992 also represented a milestone in voter turnout; after many years of decreasing attendance at the polls, voters came out in record numbers to have their say at the ballot box. Given both the circumvention of traditional media for direct-dial democracy and the rise in voter participation, the combination presents a unique opportunity to see if attention and exposure to these new media heightened interest in the campaign and perhaps increased the electorate's likelihood of voting.

A quantitative approach will be used in this study to search for patterns and relationships between attention and/or exposure to 'old' and 'new' media and political image, political

knowledge, political interest, and intended political behavior as reported by national survey respondents. In this new age of 'teledemocracy,' could talk show attention, for instance, surface as a predictor of one's level of political interest? This study aims to shed additional light on the role of these talk fests in the political arena.

Similar studies to the one being proposed here have been conducted using local and state data, and it's hoped this research will add to the knowledge base by seeing if similar patterns emerge using a much larger, national sample of respondents. This kind of analysis obviously won't provide answers to why certain relationships may or may not exist; those kinds of issues are appropriately addressed in more qualitative methodological approaches. Rather, the replication of similar research can help bolster confidence in previous findings, which can only assist mass communication scholars in their search for ties that bind mass media, public officials and the general public together in the real world.

The new media represented a new way of seeing or listening to political candidates in 1992 in that many messages were no longer screened by journalists. One broadcasting executive has already speculated that future campaigns will "remain hungry for big blocks of air time for their 'unfiltered' messages."[4] A Times Mirror nationwide survey in 1993 showed one in six Americans listening to talk radio regularly, with 11% saying they've tried to call into a radio talk show to register their opinion.[5]

Arbitron's nationwide listener survey for fall 1994 showed news/talk stations among those scoring the highest ratings in top 10 markets, a sign that the format continues to hold its own two years after the 1992 presidential race.[7] Talk show radio and television programming represent a legitimate alternative source of political news and information and deserve to be taken just as seriously as their more traditional counterparts.

Related Studies

New Media. Mass communication scholars have looked for effects of new media in the 1992 presidential election, and so far their results tell different stories. Chaffee *et al*. found that attention to talk shows like "Larry King Live" or "Rush Limbaugh" significantly predicted candidate-issue knowledge among North Carolina survey respondents in 1992.[8] Also using data from North Carolina, Bare found attention paid to talk shows in 1992 was associated with higher levels of political knowledge.[9]

Weaver and Drew, however, did not find evidence that exposure and attention to televised talk shows or network morning shows contributed to increased knowledge of candidate issue stands using results from an Indiana poll taken during the latter part of the 1992 campaign.[10] Weaver and Drew also found no indication that these non-traditional media contributed significantly to greater intention to vote or higher levels of interest in the campaign.[11]

Candidate Image. Media attention and exposure have not proven to be major direct determinants of whether a candidate's

image will be seen as positive or negative. Using data from a sample of the American electorate, Hofstetter *et al.* found that higher amounts of television viewing appeared to reinforce pre-existing images, issue positions and perceptions for Richard Nixon and George McGovern in the 1972 presidential race.[11] Using a panel study in the 1976 election, Roberts found that voters' perceptions and feelings about Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter became "polarized" early in the campaign, and suggested participants used media to "furnish substance" for their image assessments.[12]

In two separate studies, Drew and Weaver found self-reported political party identification to be a better predictor of image knowledge than mass media exposure or attention. A study using survey data from Bloomington, Indiana, during the 1988 presidential race showed only attention to campaign news on the radio was a significant predictor of George Bush's image and no significant media predictors of Michael Dukakis' image.[13] A local and statewide study of the images of Indiana U.S. senate candidates Baron Hill and Dan Coats in the 1990 off-year elections proved similarly slim for media prediction of image knowledge.[14] In both the 1988 and 1990 studies, Drew and Weaver found party identification to be amongst the strongest predictors of candidate images.[15]

Political Knowledge. Testing the assumption that levels of mass media usage can lead to increased levels of political knowledge[16] has yielded somewhat mixed results. Becker and Whitney found newspaper users to be more knowledgeable in

political affairs, while watching TV was associated with lower levels of political knowledge.[17] Drew and Weaver found that viewing televised debates during the 1988 presidential campaign led to higher levels of knowledge about campaign issues.[18] In the 1992 study by Chaffee *et al.* mentioned earlier, television events like conventions and the debates were associated with higher levels of candidate-issue knowledge.[19]

In 1990, Weaver and Drew discovered that exposure to television ads and attention to campaign news in newspapers during the 1990 U.S. Senate campaign in Indiana were significant predictors of knowing candidates' issue positions in a statewide survey; on a local level significant predictors were attention to radio news, attention to television ads and exposure to nonlocal (regional) newspaper coverage.[20] Using statewide data from the 1992 presidential race, Weaver and Drew also found higher levels of exposure to local and television news significantly predicted knowledge of issue stands of Bush and Clinton.[21]

Voter Turnout. Some observers have already credited new media with helping to bring out the voters in 1992. "Many political analysts and observers credit this rich menu [of unexpectedly diverse and democratic media] for the first increase in voter turnout in 30 years," wrote Bill Kovach for Newsday barely two months after the election.[22] Jerry Brown's frequent appearances on radio call-in shows were reportedly a key factor when he upset Bill Clinton in the Connecticut primary.[23] Paletz and Entman have said that mass media in general do encourage voting in presidential elections simply by covering contests in

which "drama, conflict and suspense over the eventual outcome promote interest and reaffirm the value of the voting ritual."[4]

Researchers have long agreed that mass media have little effect on vote conversion.[5] The media can have an effect on presidential selection, however, if they have an influence on how many people actually go to the ballot box. Graber, for instance, has noted that media-induced surges or depressions in turnout, even if relatively small, can have an impact on election outcomes, as many elections are often decided by less than one-percent of the vote.[6]

Campaign Interest. The reciprocal nature of mass media use and levels of campaign interest makes it difficult to establish which is actually influencing the other; however, Weaver *et al.* have found some evidence that exposure to television during presidential primaries in the spring of 1976 played a significant role in heightening subsequent levels of interest in the campaign.[7] Using data from the 1984 and 1988 presidential elections, Owen found campaign interest to be an "important determinant" of exposure to news stories.[8] She also found that the relationship between levels of campaign interest and exposure to campaign ads was stronger in 1988 than in 1984.[9]

The widely-cited Campbell *et al.* study, The American Voter, showed people who reported a strong party identification tended to be more interested in the 1956 presidential campaign than weak party identifiers and those who considered themselves "Independents."[10] The rate of turnout among those who said they were "very much interested" in the campaign was nearly one-third

higher than those who reported "not much" interest in the campaign.[1]

Research questions

This analysis of 1992 National Election Study (NES) data examined the extent to which new media and old media attention and/or exposure predicted responses along a number of dimensions. Specifically, the research questions in my study are:

1) Would exposure to radio and/or television talk shows be significant predictors of

   a) image knowledge of Republican candidate and incumbent George Bush or Democratic candidate Bill Clinton,
   b) political knowledge,
   c) voting intent, and
   d) interest in the campaign?

2) Would exposure and/or attention to traditional forms of media (television, newspaper, news magazines, and radio) be significant predictors of the same?

The exclusion of candidate Ross Perot where images were concerned was not intentional; on the contrary, his inclusion would have added an additional informative element, given his popularly perceived impact on the race in general. Unfortunately, equivalent measures of 'candidate image' for Perot were not available in the data set used for this study.

Survey methods

The 1992 NES was a nationally representative, face-to-face and telephone survey; 2,485 citizens were interviewed during the nine weeks prior to the November 3, 1992, election, and 2,255

pre-election respondents were reinterviewed in the weeks following the election.

There were a number of relevant questions relating to mass media use and images of the Democratic and Republican candidates. The set of questions dealing with political knowledge, however, was smaller and provided a limited range of political information upon which one could be 'tested.' Campaign interest and likelihood of voting were each measured with one question. Unfortunately, where new media use is concerned, the question did not differentiate between types of talk shows (i.e. "Larry King Live" or "The Arsenio Hall Show") and whether or not one watched radio, television or both. It also did not ask how much attention respondents paid to these new media; instead, it only asked whether one watched or listened to these shows at all.

Data analysis

Statistical Method. This study used hierarchical regression to measure the predictive power of each of the media measures. Separate blocks of independent variables were grouped the following way, and entered in this order: 1) demographics (income, age, race/minorities, gender/females, and education level) and political party identification (one measure each for Democrats and Republicans), 2) political influences (interest, intent to vote, discussion, knowledge) [when interest, voting intent, and knowledge were the dependent variable, they were not included], 3) exposure and/or attention to 'old media'

(television, newspaper, radio and magazines), and 4) a single measure of radio and television call-in talk-show exposure.

The new media variable was entered last to test its influence most rigorously, after other possible predictors, including 'old media,' were statistically controlled for. It is important to note that the large number of predictors appearing as statistically significant in this analysis could be in part a reflection of the large number of cases in this data set.

Independent Variables. Television exposure was measured by asking the question, "How many days in the past week did you watch the news on TV," with responses ranging from "0" (none) to "everyday". Newspaper exposure was similarly measured, asking "How many days a week did you read a newspaper?" Television, newspaper, and magazine attention was measured using the question, "How much attention did you pay to news [on TV/in newspaper articles/magazine articles] about the campaign for President -- a great deal, quite a bit, some, very little, or none?" For radio exposure, the survey asked, "Did you listen to any speeches or discussions about the campaign on the radio?" Exposure to radio or television talk shows was measured with, "Do you listen to or watch talk shows on radio or TV where people call in to voice their opinions?"[33] Additionally, a block of demographic variables was used to control for a number of other possible influences.[34]

To help reduce problems of multicollinearity and to create more sensitive measuring instruments, scales representing 'newspaper exposure and attention' and 'television exposure and

attention' were created based on their bivariate correlations (TV exposure and TV attention, .62; newspaper exposure and newspaper attention, .57), and subsequent factor loadings (.83 and .77 for TV exposure and attention respectively, and .79 and .74 for newspaper exposure and attention).[36]

Dependent Variables. The five dependent variables were scales representing Bush's image and Clinton's image, a scale representing political knowledge, a single measure of likelihood of voting[38] and a single measure of campaign interest.[37] Candidate image was measured by asking how well particular words or phrases described Bush and Clinton.[35] Reliability coefficients computed on both the Bush and Clinton scales resulted in comfortably high alphas of .90. The political knowledge scale was made up of questions from the "political knowledge" category in the post-election survey.[39] The alpha on the six-item scale was an acceptable .71.

Findings

Candidate Images. The regression runs showed that the old media variables did not add much to the overall equations and that the addition of the new media variable was not even statistically significant at the $p<.05$ level. The effect of adding the traditional media block was minimal, with a minute .004 R square change for Bush's image and .006 for Clinton's.

--- insert Tables 1 and 2 about here ---

The new media variable failed to show up as a statistically significant predictor for either Bush or Clinton. Of the individual traditional media measures, attention to magazine articles about the campaign was a statistically significant, albeit very slight, predictor of image for both candidates (-.06, $p<.01$, for Bush and .05, $p<.05$), for Clinton). The only other statistically significant media predictor was television attention and exposure for Clinton's image, at .06, $p<.01$.

The small Betas call for restraint in interpreting these results; however, they do reflect to some extent a bit of the conventional wisdom surrounding the candidates in 1992. There was speculation, for instance, that coverage in general was more negative for Bush; a Washington Post columnist commented that her examination of news coverage during the contest showed it was "very lopsided" in favor of Clinton.[40] There were also suggestions that Clinton was more telegenic than Bush, and more successful at putting himself in a good light on television.

What does show up as a relatively strong predictor of candidate image for both Bush and Clinton is self-reported party identification, which suggests that persons bring a lot of their own orientations to their perceptions of political candidates. The Republican party ID Beta weight for Bush's image was .39, $p<.001$; for Clinton, the Beta for party ID was .28, $p<.001$.

In neither case was the percentage of variance accounted for by the independent variables very high. The R square for Bush was .25, while only 19 percent was accounted for in Clinton's

image scale. Obviously there were still a number of influences on candidate image unaccounted for in this analysis.

Political Knowledge. Not surprisingly, education level's ability to predict political knowledge was stronger than any of the other measures in this study, at .32, $p<.001$.

--- insert Table 3 about here ---

Traditional media measures as a block accounted for only a .013 R square change in the regression, and the addition of radio and television talk show exposure was even less noticeable at .002, $p<.01$. All the media measures were statistically significant, but their relative strengths were rather weak in general. The strongest was newspaper attention and exposure, at .09, $p<.001$, suggesting to a small extent that regular newspaper readers may be more knowledgeable about political affairs. It's likely the -.05, $p<.01$, Beta for the talk show variable was a statistical artifact, given its zero-order correlation with political knowledge (.01) was not even significant at $p<.05$.

Political interest (.17, $p<.001$) and political discussion (.09, $p<.001$) were also significant predictors of political knowledge, logically suggesting that persons more interested in politics and those who discuss it more often are going to be more knowledgeable about political persons or issues. Among the demographic variables other than education, gender/females had the highest significant Beta weight, at -.19, $p<.001$. Other significant predictors were age (.13, $p<.001$) and race/minorities

(-.12, $p<.001$). It might be reasonable to speculate that older persons know more about politics; where the gender and minority variables were concerned, it's important to note that the questions in the scale did not refer to any females or minorities.

Likelihood of Voting. Newspaper attention and exposure was the only statistically significant media predictor of one's likelihood of voting, but at only .09 ($p<.001$) it's too slight to jump to any conclusions. As a block, traditional media added only slightly to the overall equation, with an R square change of .007 ($p<.001$), while the addition of radio and/or TV talk show exposure was not even statistically significant.

--- insert Table 4 about here ---

It's difficult to say with any certainty why newspaper attention and exposure was the only significant media predictor, but one can acknowledge that newspapers generally are the easiest place to find information on registration dates and locations, and where and when to vote. Suggestions, meanwhile, that new media spurred people to vote were obviously not supported in this analysis, but it's possible this particular study was not the right tool for the task (given the question wording in this data set). The diversity of talk shows available, which can vary tremendously by type and quantity from market to market across a state and across the country, is also a relevant consideration; studies that could address these types of specifics might provide

a more realistic account of radio and television talk show's role in getting the vote out.

The strongest predictor of one's likelihood of voting was political interest, at .20 ($p<.001$), and it stands to reason that the more interested a person is in a campaign, the more likely that person may be to cast a vote. Political knowledge was also statistically significant, at .07 ($p<.01$). Many demographic variables were also statistically significant, the strongest being party ID for both Democrats (.17, $p<.001$) and Republicans (.14, $p<.001$), confirming findings from earlier studies that partisans are more likely to participate in politics than non-partisans.

Interest in the Campaign. Exposure to radio and television talk shows shows up as a statistically significant minor predictor of campaign interest, at .07, $p<.001$. The idea that higher levels of exposure to such media could influence one's level of interest certainly does reflect traditional wisdom surrounding the campaign, but in this study it's still too small to make any generalizations. .

--- insert Table 5 about here ---

Attention and exposure to television news was among the strongest predictors in this analysis (.20, $p<.001$), second only to political discussion, which had the highest Beta at .25, $p<.001$. The only other statistically significant media variable was magazine attention (.06, $p<.001$). Overall, the political

variables were the strongest predictors of campaign interest in this study.

Among the demographic variables, only party identification and education were significant predictors. Betas for party ID were .10, *p<.001*, for Democrats and .06, *p<.05*., for Republicans. The Beta weight for education level was also .06, *p<.01*.

Summary and Conclusions

This study suggests that one's party affiliation has much more influence on one's perception of a political candidate than attention and/or exposure to traditional and talk show media; that higher levels of general education are better predictors of higher levels of political knowledge than media use; and, that political influences are generally stronger predictors of one's likelihood of voting and campaign interest than exposure and/or attention to mass media. At the same time, this study illustrates the difficulty in finding strong media predictors given the other influences that on political images, knowledge, interest, and intended behavior.

However, the findings here are in line with previous research addressing similar questions, suggesting that perhaps certain patterns may exist. These results from 1992 data, for instance, reflect on a national scale what Drew and Weaver (1988, 1990) found in city- and state-wide studies regarding the role of party ID in the perception of political candidates.

Are images of political candidates generally 'filtered', for instance, through one's political leanings and interpreted in a

way that fits one's ideological slant? If so, then does it matter how the candidate comes through in the media at all if party ID is such a strong predictor, or are there still certain circumstances (perhaps an embarrassing incident) during which new or old media could override one's party loyalty in assembling that candidate's image? And to what extent could a candidate's rhetorical strategy affect this relationship?

Overall, given the minor role talk shows and traditional media played in this analysis, it might appear on the surface that popular speculations on the media's relative power may seem a bit overdrawn. Relegating these forms of media (particularly the direct-dial type) to a minor role in the theater of politics, however, seems a bit premature as well; this study, for instance, measured direct effects of media and not indirect ones.

Given the existing research in the areas of mass media and political image, knowledge, interest and likelihood of voting, opportunities for research concerning the 'new-found' talk show vehicle for election communication abound. More attention could certainly be focused on the impact of call-in radio and television talk shows on voter turnout and voter participation.

Other studies could look at whether or not talk show hosts serve as surrogate journalists by framing news issues within their own ideological context, thus providing an alternative window to the world. Content analyses of these discussions might also serve to show whether talk show hosts are borrowing, altering or refitting journalistic conventions within their own environments of political information and entertainment. Still

other studies could look at the impact of talk shows on public opinion, given some anecdotal evidence that traditional news coverage was not the only media force behind the polls in 1992.[42]

The impact of these new media in political election campaigns has really only begun to be taken seriously among researchers of mass communication. While call-in talk radio programs date back at least to the 1930s (and scholarly research to the '40s),[43] call-in talk shows on television have only of late had a nationally perceived impact on a presidential campaign. Newhagen has examined whether class, race and political efficacy predicted the use of call-in television programs in 1992, but studies like his are only beginning to surface.[44]

For media scholar Philip Meyer, Clinton's appearance on Arsenio represented more than a media stunt; rather, it signaled the forging of a "new and possibly long-lasting linkage between popular culture and political information," one that provided a new channel to voters who have become distant from party loyalties and disenfranchised by ever-distant, one-way messages from traditional forms of mass media.[45] This appears to be prime time for researchers to begin asking more questions about the kind of role this type of communication plays in presidential campaigns, and about the effects these programs have on voter attitudes, perceptions and behavior.

Endnotes

[1]The Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, The Homestretch: New Politics, New Media, New Voters? (New York: Columbia University, 1992), 51.

[2]Marvin Kalb, "Too Much Talk, Not Enough Action," in Impact of Mass Media: Current Issues, 3rd edition, ed. Ray Eldon Hiebert (White Plains, NY: Longman, 1995), 264.

[3]Over 104-million people cast votes in the 1992 election. Information from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Statistical Abstract of the United States 1994 (Lanham, MD: Bernan Press, 1994), 269. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's November 1992 "Current Population Survey", 61.3 percent of the voting-age population reported they voted in the 1992 general election, representing the highest turnout recorded in the "CPS" since the 1972 elections. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, P20-466, Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1992 (U.S.Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1993), p. v.

[4]Gary Griffith, "The Talk-show Campaign," in Impact of Mass Media: Current Issues, 3rd edition, ed. Ray Eldon Hiebert (White Plains, NY: Longman, 1996), 261.

[5]Times Mirror Center for The People and the Press, The Vocal Minority in American Politics, 16 July 1993, News Release, pp. 8-10.

[6]Donna Petrozzello, "Talk still going strong; news/talk format in radio," Broadcasting and Cable 125 (23 January 1995), 162 [NEXIS/NEWS/CURNWS].

[7]Steven H. Chaffee, Xinshu Zhao, and Glenn Leshner, "Political Knowledge and the Campaign Media of 1992," Communication Research 21 (June 1994): 313-317.

[8]John Bare, "The Role of Non-Traditional News Sources in the 1992 Campaign" (Paper presented to the American Association for Public Opinion Research, St. Charles, IL, 1993).

[9]David Weaver and Dan Drew, "Voter Learning in the 1992 Presidential Election: Did the 'Non-Traditional' Media and Debates Matter?" Journalism Quarterly 72 (Spring 1995), in press [personal copy, p. 11].

[11] Ibid.

[12] C. Richard Hofstetter, Cliff Zukin, and Terry F. Buss, "Political Imagery and Information in an Age of Television," Journalism Quarterly 55 (Autumn 1978), 568-569.

[13] Churchill L. Roberts, "From Primary to the Presidency: A Panel Study of Images and Issues in the 1976 Election," The Western Journal of Speech Communication 45 (Winter 1981): 65-70.

Weaver, McCombs, Graber, and Eyal, meanwhile, found an image agenda-setting effect in the 1976 presidential election, whereby the *Chicago Tribune's* emphasis and de-emphasis on certain image attributes appeared to influence voter evaluations and voter images of Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford. David Weaver, Maxwell McCombs, Doris A. Graber, and Chaim H. Eyal, Media Agenda Setting in a Presidential Election: Issues, Images and Interest (New York: Praeger, 1981), esp. 171-193. These image attributes included whether or not the candidate was presented as compassionate or forthright, for instance.

[14] David Weaver and Dan Drew, "Voter Learning in the 1988 Presidential Election: Did the Debates and the Media Matter?" Journalism Quarterly 68 (Spring/Summer 1991): 27-37.

[15] Weaver and Drew, "Voter Learning in the 1990 Off-Year Election: Did the Media Matter?" Journalism Quarterly 70 (Summer 1993): 356-367, specifically 361-362. Media attention and exposure did not significantly predict the images of Hill or Coats in either the 1990 Indiana Poll statewide survey or in the 1990 Bloomington city survey.

[16] In the 1990 study, knowledge of issue stands were also relatively strong predictors of whether respondents considered Coats or Hill to be "competent, trustworthy or in touch with a variety of people." Weaver and Drew, "Voter Learning in the 1990...," esp. 365-366.

[17] Joslyn has organized the major types of learning that occur in political campaigns into five categories: awareness of candidates (name recognition), issue agenda (awareness and concern for different political issues), "horse-race" perceptions (which candidates are gaining and losing support), candidate personal attributes (image dimensions), and candidate policy preferences (perceptions of policy preferences of candidates). Richard A. Joslyn, "Election Campaigns as Occasions for Civic Education," New Directions in Political Communication, eds. David

L. Swanson and Dan Nimmo (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1990), 109-115.

[17] Lee B. Becker and Charles D. Whitney, "Effects of Media Dependencies on Audience Assessment of Government," Communication Research 7 (January 1980): 95-120.

[18] Drew and Weaver, "Voter Learning in the 1988...".

[19] Chaffee, et al, "Political Knowledge...".

[20] Weaver and Drew, "Voter Learning in the 1990...".

[21] Weaver and Drew, "Voter Learning in the 1992...".

[22] Bill Kovach, "The Media Invigorated '92's Politics," Newsday, 21 December 1992, 59 [NEXIS/NEWS/CURNWS].

[23] Peter Viles, "Talk radio a player in the presidential campaign," Broadcasting 25 (15 June 1992), 14 [NEXIS/NEWS/ARCNWS].

[24] David L. Paletz and Robert M. Entman, Media, Power, Politics (New York: The Free Press, a division of Macmillan Publishing, 1981), 235.

[25] This harkens back to Paul Lazarsfeld and his study of the 1940 presidential election. Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet, The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), 94-100.

[26] Doris Graber, Mass Media and American Politics (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1993), 280.

[27] Weaver, Graber, McCombs, Eyal, Media Agenda Setting in a Presidential Election..., 65-75.

[28] Diana Owen, Media Messages in Presidential Elections (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 78.

[29] Ibid., 36-37. Owen also noted that highly interested voters tend to seek out campaign information from multiple media sources, 27

[30] Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, The American Voter: An Abridgment (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964), 83-85.

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[31]Ibid., 56-57.

[32]Warren E. Miller, Donald R. Kinder, Steven J. Rosenstone, and the National Election Studies, American National Election Study, 1992: Pre- and Post-Election Survey [enhanced with 1990 and 1991 data] (Computer file). Conducted by University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies. ICPSR ed. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies, and Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [Producers], 1993.

[33]A number of obvious limitations come with these questions, not the least of which is the lack of differentiation between radio and TV talk shows and the *type* of talk shows people watched. Similarly, it would have been helpful to know what types of news magazines respondents were considering in their responses.

[34]These included age, income level, party identification, and education. A number of independent variables were also recoded before regressions were run; question wording made it necessary to flip the scales so that low levels of interest, attention, etc., represented low numbers in the coding, for instance. Additionally, "if" statements in the SPSS program were used to recapture many cases that had been declared missing due to filter questions used by the NES study team.

[35]Reliability coefficients computed for these scales resulted in a Cronbach's alpha of .61 for the newspaper measure and .66 for television exposure and attention. These are somewhat lower than one might like, but not so low as to rule out using the scales instead of independent measures, considering these scales consist of only two items apiece.

[36]To measure one's likelihood of voting, the survey asked, "(s)o far as you know now, do you expect to vote in the national elections this coming November or not?"

[37]The question measuring campaign interest was, "(s)ome people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you? Would you say that you were very much interested, somewhat interested, or not much interested in following the political campaigns this year?"

[38]These included intelligence, knowledge, ability to 'get things done', compassion, honesty, and morality, whether the candidate was considered inspiring, and whether he was thought of an providing strong leadership and 'really caring about people

like you'. The choice of responses was the same for each candidate: Not too well at all, not too well, quite well, or extremely well.

[39]The six questions were 1) What job or political office does Dan Quayle hold, 2) What job or political office does William Rehnquist hold, 3) What job or political office does Boris Yeltsin hold, 4) What job or political office does Tom Foley hold, 5) Who has the final responsibility to decide if a law is constitutional or not... the President, the Congress, the Supreme Court, or don't you know, and 6) Whose responsibility is it to nominate judges to the Federal Courts... the President, the Congress, the Supreme Court, or don't you know?

[40]Joann Byrd, "73 Days of Tilt," The Washington Post 115, 8 November 1992, C6. Byrd said out of 813 pictures, headlines and news stories, 184 appeared to be negative for or about Bush and 175 were positive. For Clinton, she found 195 positive elements and 52 negative.

[41]In a behind the camera study of ABC'S *World News Tonight* coverage of the 1992 presidential campaign, Tom Rosenstiel recounted how Ross Perot parlayed talk show appearances into political success; " (h)e was at 20 percent in the polls, and he had done it without benefit of party, elections, or even attention of the establishment press." Strange Bedfellows: How Television and the Presidential Candidates Changed American Politics, 1992 (New York: Hyperion, 1993), 165.

[42]Cameron B. Armstrong and Alan M. Rubin, "Talk Radio as Interpersonal Communication," Journal of Communication 39 (Spring 1989), 84.

[43]John E. Hewhagen, "Self-Efficacy and Call-in Political Television Show Use," Communication Research 21 (June 1994): 366-379. Political efficacy refers to the amount a person feels that his or her political action can have a real impact on the political process, i.e. "does my vote count?" [Newhagen, 367].

[44]Philip Meyer, "The Media Reformation: Giving the Agenda Back to the People," in The Elections of 1992, ed. Michael Nelson (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1993), 89-90.

TABLE 1

Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Predictors of Bush's Image

(American National Election Study (NES) 1992, n=2485)

Predictor Variables	Regression 1	Regression 2	Regression 3	Regression 4
Income	.01	.02	.02	.02
Age	.08***	.09***	.09***	.09***
Race (Minorities)	-.10***	-.11***	-.11***	-.11***
Party ID (Democrats)	-.09***	-.09**	-.09**	-.10***
Gender (Females)	.01	-.005	-.006	-.005
Education	-.07***	-.04	-.02	-.02
Party ID (Republicans)	.39***	.39***	.39***	.39***
Political Discussion		-.003	.001	8.95E-04
Likelihood of Voting		.03	.03	.03
Political Interest		7.5E-04	-8.6E-04	-.003
Political Knowledge		-.08***	-.08***	-.08***
Radio Exposure (yes/no)			-005	-.009
Magazine Attention			-.06**	-.06**
TV Attention/Exposure			.03	.02
NP Attention/Exposure			-.004	-.004
Radio and/or TV Talk Show Exposure				.03
R Square	.24	.25	.25	.25
R Square Change	.24	.005	.004	.0006
Sig. of Change	.0000	.0023	.0188	.1495

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

TABLE 2

Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Predictors of Clinton's Image

(American National Election Study (NES) 1992; n=2485)

Predictor Variables	Regression 1	Regression 2	Regression 3	Regression 4
Income	-.05*	-.05**	-.06**	-.06**
Age	.06**	.05**	.03	.03
Race (Minorities)	.09***	.08***	.08***	.08***
Party ID (Democrats)	.30***	.28***	.28***	.28***
Gender (Females)	-6.06E-05	-.009	-.009	-.01
Education	-.05*	-.04	-.05*	-.05*
Party ID (Republicans)	-.10***	-.11***	-.11***	-.11***
Political Discussion		-.03	-.04*	-.04*
Likelihood of Voting		.05*	.05*	.05*
Political Interest		.06*	.03	.04
Political Knowledge		-.05*	-.06*	-.06**
Radio Exposure (yes/no)			.01	.02
Magazine Attention			.05*	.05*
TV Attention/Exposure			.06**	.06**
NP Attention/Exposure			.02	.02
Radio and/or TV Talk Show Exposure				-.03
R Square	.18	.18	.19	.19
R Square Change	.18	.006	.006	.00097
Sig. of Change	.0000	.0013	.0011	.0843

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

TABLE 3

Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Predictors of Political Knowledge

(American National Election Study (NES) 1992; n=2485)

Predictor Variables	Regression 1	Regression 2	Regression 3	Regression 4
Income	.06**	.04*	.04*	.03
Age	.20***	.17***	.13***	.13***
Race (Minorities)	-.13***	-.12***	-.12***	-.12***
Party ID (Democrats)	.10***	.03	.02	.02
Gender (Females)	-.22***	-.20***	-.19***	-.19***
Education	.44***	.35***	.33***	.32***
Party ID (Republicans)	.11***	.04	.04	.04
Political Discussion		.11***	.09***	.09***
Likelihood of Voting		.06***	.05**	.05
Political Interest		.19***	.17***	.17***
Radio Exposure (yes/no)			.04**	.05***
Magazine Attention			.04*	.04*
TV Attention/Exposure			.03	.04*
NP Attention/Exposure			.09***	.09***
Radio and/or TV Talk Show Exposure				-.05**
R Square	.334	.398	.41	.41
R Square Change	.336	.065	.013	.002
Sig. of Change	.0000	.0000	.0000	.0040

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

TABLE 4

Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Predictors of Voting Intention

(American National Election Study (NES) 1992; n=2485)

Predictor Variables	Regression 1	Regression 2	Regression 3	Regression 4
Income	.09***	.08***	.08***	.08***
Age	.15***	.10***	.08***	.08***
Race (Minorities)	-.03	-.02	-.02	-.02
Party ID (Democrats)	.24***	.18***	.17***	.17***
Gender (Females)	-.01	.02	.03	.03
Education	.21***	.11***	.10***	.10***
Party ID (Republicans)	.20***	.15***	.14***	.14***
Political Discussion		.02	.01	.01
Political Interest		.21***	.20***	.196***
Political Knowledge		.08***	.06**	.07**
Radio Exposure (yes/no)			.006	.003
Magazine Attention			-.008	-.009
TV Attention/Exposure			.01	.009
NP Attention/Exposure			.09***	.09***
Radio and/or TV Talk Show Exposure				.01
R Square	.110	.163	.169	.169
R Square Change	.113	.053	.007	.0002
Sig. of Change	.0000	.0000	.0003	.4678

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

TABLE 5

Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Predictors of Campaign Interest

(American National Election Study (NES) 1992, n=2485)

Predictor Variables	Regression 1	Regression 2	Regression 3	Regression 4
Income	.04	.001	.007	.009
Age	.12***	.04	-.02	-.02
Race (Minorities)	-.02	.02	.003	-.001
Party ID (Democrats)	.24***	.13***	.11***	.10***
Gender (Females)	-.05*	.01	.01	.01
Education	.26***	.06**	.06**	.06**
Party ID (Republicans)	.20***	.08**	.06*	.06*
Political Discussion		.29***	.25***	.25***
Likelihood of Voting		.18***	.16***	.15***
Political Knowledge		.23***	.18***	.19***
Radio Exposure (yes/no)			.03	.02
Magazine Attention			.07***	.06***
TV Attention/Exposure			.22***	.20***
NP Attention/Exposure			.007	.006
Radio and/or TV Talk Show Exposure				.07***
R Square	.114	.292	.340	.345
R Square Change	.117	.178	.049	.004
Sig. of Change	.0000	.0000	.0000	.0001

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Television Credibility Revisited: A Longitudinal Study

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Television Credibility Revisited:
A Longitudinal Study

(Abstracts)

Based on reliable national survey data, this study challenges the common belief that television is more trustworthy than the print media, concluding that at least since the early 1970s, television has fallen behind the print media in receiving Americans' confidence rating. It also shows that the decline of television credibility over the past 25 years could not just be attributed to the emergence of a more critical audience.

Television Credibility Revisited: A Longitudinal Study

For long in the United States, television has been widely considered a medium more credible than the print media, especially in the filed of news reporting. Most studies comparing television with the print media on the credibility issue came to conclude that television was more favorably rated (Chang & Lemert, 1968; Abel & Wirth, 1977; Atkin & Elwood, 1978; Lee, 1978; Reagan & Zenaty, 1979; Gaziano & McGrath, 1985a & 1985b). Even the American Society of Newspaper Editors admitted that Americans prefer television over newspapers by a wide margin, "not only because of its ease but also because they find television more believable and less biased" (*Los Angeles Times*, 1985).

The conclusions of these studies, supporting one another, are so forceful that over the last ten years or so, scholars seemed to have ceased to explore whether television is really more trustworthy than the newspaper. To many people, the question is virtually settled. If a picture is worth a thousand words, how can the print media compete with television with all its visual and audio effects?

Most studies comparing television and newspapers on credibility, however, were based on forced comparison. That is, they asked respondents to name their preference for a particular medium. It was suggested that such forced comparison might not have led to reliable answers because the criteria people used to judge television credibility could be different from those used to judge newspapers (Newhagen & Nass, 1989). Past researchers studying the media credibility issue were probably right when they concluded that television was considered more credible in news reporting or under specified conditions.

However, the answer might have been different had the respondents been asked to express their confidence in the two types of media separately while using their own criteria for judgment. A hypothesis like this, nevertheless, has never been tested.

In addition, most of these earlier studies were one-shot tests. Because different questions were asked and different criteria employed, they could not be used for comparative purposes to monitor longitudinal changes although the statistics produced in these studies tended to show a continuous decline in media credibility.

Because the fundamental reality of mind is socially based (Scheibe, 1970), earlier studies found that people with high education and income tended to be more critical and place less trust in the media (Einsiedel & Casey, 1979; Gaziano & McGrath, 1985a; Stamm, 1987). Since education and income are generally on the increase in various societies, we are not sure whether the continuous decline in the public perception of media credibility should be attributed to the increasingly more discerning public alone, or to the media's own problems as well.

This study is a continuation of past efforts to examine media credibility. Using reliable national survey data, it seeks to find out if Americans really have more trust in television than in the print media. It also attempts to answer the question of whether the decline in television credibility, should this be found true, could be explained by demographic changes of American society alone.

Two basic approaches have been employed in past studies to tackle the issue of media credibility. One focuses on how internal factors, i.e., factors related to how media present news and other information to the public, affect the audience's perception of media credibility (Chang & Lemert, 1968; Culbertson

& Somerick, 1976; Abel & Wirth, 1977; and Gaziano & McGrath, 1985a, etc.). The second approach focuses on various demographic variables that affect people's perception of media credibility (Einsiedel & Casey, 1979; Pratt, 1981; and Stamm, 1987, etc.). This study follows the second approach.

Literature Review

Roughly in the 1960s, when television had gained increasingly populairty in the United States, communication scholars and the media industries began interested in comparative study of television and other media for credibility. A favorite topic for their studies is which medium fares better in terms of credibility.

Chang and Lemert (1968) noted the relative anonymity of the newspaper reporter and described this as a reason for people to assign greater credibility to television than the newspaper. Abel & Wirth (1977) said that in terms of local news coverage, television was perceived to be a more credible, truthful, and important news source than the newspaper. Reagan & Zenaty (1979) reached a similar conclusion. Citing their survey results, Atkins & Elwood (1978) pointed out that high school students favored television as a news source by a wide margin over newspapers, radio, and news magazines in three areas: general preference, believability, and preference should the consumer be limited to one news source. In a survey of college students, Lee (1978) found that 76 percent of the polled said they would believe television news while only 24 percent said they would believe newspaper news in case of conflicting or different reports of the same news story.

The advantages of television over the print media in winning people's confidence were clearly stated by Gaziano & McGrath (1985b) in a study on attitudes towards the credibility of individual media and news media in general. They found that

television was chosen by most respondents as the medium (1) they would believe concerning reports of conflict; (2) they would choose if they were limited to just one source for local, state, or national/international news; and (3) they considered most reliable for local, state, and national/international news.

These studies have one thing in common. That is, they forced respondents to make a direct comparison of the two different types of media in researcher-defined situations. As Newhagen and Nass (1989) noted, "many respondents base their perception of credibility or confidence in a newspaper on its performance as an institution, while they base their perception of credibility on the standards and trustworthiness of television news on the performance of an aggregate of on-camera personalities . . . . The comparison thus imposes different criteria and different levels of analysis on the media consumer to answer the question."

Another area of study on media credibility is the impact of demographic differences of audiences on their confidence in various media. In a study of African and U.S. students, Pratt (1981) attempted to test if those who used media more intensively were more likely to trust the media, but the hypothesized positive relationship between media exposure and perceived media credibility was generally not supported in either sample groups.

Einsiedel and Casey (1979) found that people with less education tended to select television as the most credible medium. Gaziano and McGrath (1985a) identified two segments of the population who were relatively more critical of the media. One segment is composed of people with relatively high education and income and greater propensity to act when angered by media content. The other is made up by people with relatively low education and income, less knowledge of media, and less likelihood of taking action when provoked by media content. The second segment was also identified in a survey report (*Miami*

Herald, 1985), which noted that less educated people are more likely to distrust the media. It claimed that at one end of the social-economic spectrum of people who most distrust the media are those who are less well-informed and suspicious. These were people with less education and lower incomes than the majority. They were said to be bound together by their demographic characteristics and by alienation and suspicion. A Gallop poll (*Los Angeles Times*, 1986) found that critics of the news media generally exhibit greater knowledge about the press, greater interest in press issues than those who are supportive. The majority of critics also share a conservative ideology and a college education. In his study, Stamm (1987) concluded that there was a negative correlation between respondents' education and PSI -- perception of a face-to-face relationship between spectator and media performer.

In addition to the above-mentioned factors, other variables were also found to be associated with people's confidence in the media. A survey (*Los Angeles Times*, 1993) concluded that blacks, liberals, women as well as people with less education and lower incomes generally gave the news media (especially television news) higher ratings than other groups.

Methods

To re-examine the question of media credibility on a longitudinal basis, cumulative data gathered in the General Social Survey (GSS) by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago was used in this study.

Since 1972, the GSS has been conducted annually to find out the attitudes of Americans towards various issues. Each survey involves about 1,500 interviews. By 1993, the total number had accumulated to nearly 30,000. Respondents in each yearly survey are composed of a national cross-section of

non-institutionalized persons over 18 years of age in the continental United States. In the early years, half of the samples were selected using full probability techniques and half via block quota sampling. Samples since 1975 have been selected with a full probability sampling design. The GSS uses identical questions each year. Exact question wordings are available from the General Social Surveys, 1972-1993: Cumulative Codebook (Davis & Smith, 1993).

Among the hundreds of separate but continuous questions in this GSS survey, the respondents were asked how much confidence they had in the press, television, and radio respectively. The possible answers were "a great deal," "only some" and "hardly any." Although such questions do not specify particular aspects of the media, the answers serve as instruments to measure the overall confidence of respondents in the three types of media. They were used as dependent variables. Based on findings of earlier students, various demographic variables that may affect people's confidence in media were selected as independent variables. They include the respondent's age, sex, race, education, income, mobility, occupation, job prestige, work status, income, party affiliation, television viewing time, frequency of reading a newspaper and radio listening habit. To facilitate the statistical test, some of the variables were recoded.(1) To monitor longitudinal changes, the time in which the surveys were conduced was recoded into three groups -- the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s -- to reduce year-by-year sampling errors and mark the three decades.

The dependent and independent variables were crosstabulated, with possible contaminating variables under control, to test their relationships. In testing the strength of association, different statistics were used to measure the direction and strength of association: chi-square (Mantel-Haenszel) for significance; Phi for variables on dichotomous, nominal scales;

coefficient of contingency for variables on non-dichotomous nominal scales; and Gamma for variables on ordinal scales.

Findings

Contrary to the findings of many previous studies, the results of a crosstabulation between confidence in media and the time of interview show that people do not have greater confidence in television than in the press.

The results indicate an overall decline in people's confidence in both television and the press. The proportion of respondents who have a great deal of confidence has decreased over the years while more and more people said they had hardly any confidence in either television or the press.

Although there were ups and downs in the percentage of people who said they had a great deal of confidence in both types of media, people were more likely to say they had a great deal of confidence in the press than in television. At the same time, they were more likely to say that they had hardly any confidence in television than in the press. The results show that people's confidence in television has fallen behind that in the print media since the 1970s. The only exception was found in the year of 1993 when television fared a little better than the press in getting trusted, but that was mainly the result of a decline in people's confidence in the press rather than a gain of television in obtaining people's trust. See Table 1 for details.

Table 1
Confidence in the Press and TV (1973 to 1993)

Year	Media	Great Deal(%)	Only Some(%)	Hardly Any(%)
93	press	11.0	49.6	39.3
	TV	11.7	51.1	37.2
91	press	16.7	54.9	28.4
	TV	14.5	55.0	30.4
90	Press	15.2	59.5	25.3
	TV	13.9	58.9	27.2
89	Press	17.1	55.5	27.4
	TV	14.3	56.3	29.5
88	Press	18.9	55.0	26.0
	TV	14.4	58.9	26.7
87	Press	19.3	57.4	23.2
	TV	12.7	59.7	27.5
86	Press	18.6	55.4	25.9
	TV	15.2	56.6	28.2
84	Press	17.3	59.9	22.8
	TV	13.4	57.8	28.8
83	press	13.7	62.3	24.0
	TV	12.7	58.6	28.7
82	press	18.3	61.6	20.2
	TV	15.5	59.3	25.2
80	Press	22.6	59.6	17.8
	TV	16.3	55.5	28.2
78	Press	20.5	59.5	20.1
	TV	14.0	54.4	31.6
77	Press	25.7	58.5	15.8
	TV	17.7	56.8	25.5
76	Press	29.0	53.0	18.0
	TV	19.1	53.2	27.7
75	Press	24.5	57.1	18.4
	TV	18.3	58.8	22.9
74	Press	26.2	56.1	17.7
	TV	23.7	58.8	17.5

73	Press	23.4	61.7	14.9
	TV	18.8	59.1	22.1

The results of a crosstabulation of time and confidence in the media give a clearer picture of the decline of people's confidence in both the press and television. As can be seen from Table 2, people who had a great deal of confidence in the press decreased from 24.6 percent in 1970s to 18.3 percent in the 1980s and then to 14.2 percent in the 1990s. At the same time, people who had a great deal of confidence in television decreased from 18.6 percent to 14.3 percent and 13.3 percent. For both the press and television, people who had hardly any confidence in them increased during the three periods.

Table 2
Changes in Confidence in Press and TV over Three Periods

Decades		70s(%)	80s(%)	90s(%)
Great deal	(Press)	24.6	18.3	14.2
	(TV)	18.6	14.3	13.3
Only Some	(Press)	57.7	58.7	54.4
	(TV)	56.8	58.0	54.8
Hardly any	(Press)	17.5	23.1	31.4
	(TV)	24.6	27.7	31.9

Gamma=.11 p=.000

To re-examine which demographic variables are associated with people's confidence in television, all the demographic variables selected were crosstabulated with people's confidence in television. The data gathered over twenty-one years have given the researchers greater confidence in identifying variables that might affect people's confidence in television. See Table 3 for results.

Table 3
Relations between Confidence in Television and Various Variables

Confidence in TV	Great Deal(%)	Only Some(%)	Hardly Any(%)	Stat.	sig.
Time Spent Watching TV					
Excessive Viewers	27.5	57.4	15.1		
Heavy Viewers	17.9	59.7	22.4		
Light Viewers	11.2	55.7	33.1		
Nonviewers	9.9	40.5	49.5	Gamma=.28	p=.000
Education					
17-20 years	8.4	56.0	35.5		
13-16 years	11.8	57.5	30.7		
7-12 years	18.1	57.5	24.4		
0-6 years	25.8	50.9	23.3	Gamma=-.19	p=.000
Income					
Over $25K	8.2	58.3	33.5		
Up to $25K	13.2	55.5	31.3		
Up to $20K	13.7	57.9	28.4		
Up to $15K	15.0	59.7	25.3		
Under $10K	17.1	57.7	25.2	Gamma=-.17	p=.000
Job Prestige					
70-89	11.8	53.1	35.1		
50-69	10.6	59.5	29.9		
30-49	15.3	58.0	26.8		
10-29	21.3	55.7	23.0	Gamma=-.14	p=.000
Newspaper Reading Habit					
Very Often	13.7	58.8	27.5		
Sometimes	16.6	55.1	28.3		
Never	22.8	50.6	26.6	Gamma=.05	p=.000

Mobility (2)					
Same City	17.2	57.9	24.9		
Same State	14.9	56.6	28.5		
Different State	14.5	56.6	28.9	Gamma=.07	p=.000
Race					
White	14.9	56.9	28.3		
Black	20.9	59.0	20.1	Contingency Coefficient =.80	p=.000
Other	21.9	55.2	22.9		
Work Status					
Employed	14.2	57.8	28.0		
Jobless	19.5	58.6	54.0		
Retired	19.1	58.6	54.0	Contingency Coefficient =.06	p=.000
At Home	17.4	57.0	25.6		
Sex					
Male	16.9	55.1	28.0		
female	15.0	58.7	26.2	Phi=.04	p=.924
Age					
18-19	25.8	54.7	19.6		
20-39	15.4	57.6	27.0		
40-59	14.5	57.6	28.0		
60 and above	17.5	55.9	26.6	Gamma=.002	p=.931

Of the various variables selected, four variables were found to be worthy of consideration on the basis of statistical values obtained. The amount of time people normally spend watching television is positively related to their confidence in television. People who spent more time watching television tended to say that they had a great deal of confidence in television than people who watched less. At the same time, people who watched less television were more likely to say they had hardly any confidence in the medium.

Education is negatively related to confidence in television. The more education a person has received, the more likely for that person to say that he has little confidence in television. Only 8.4 percent of the people who have received 17 to 20 years of education said they had a great deal of confidence in television while 35.5 percent of them said they had hardly any confidence in television. As the educational level increased, the chance for people to say they had a great deal of confidence decreased.

The same kind of relationships were found between the respondents' income and confidence in television as well as between respondents' job prestige and confidence in television. People with higher income and job prestige tended to show less confidence in television while people with low income and job prestige were more likely to show stronger confidence in television.

To monitor changes significantly related to people's confidence in television, these four variables were crosstabulated with the three time periods. Results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Changes of TV Viewing Habits, Education, Income and Job Prestige in Three Decades

Variables	70s(%)	80s(%)	90s(%)	Stat.	Significance
Income					
Under $10K	60.7	35.2	25.0		
Up to $15K	20.4	17.8	12.9		
Up to $20K	9.8	13.2	13.4		
Up to $25K	4.4	11.7	12.2		
Over $25K	4.6	22.0	36.5	Gamma=.43	p=.000
Education					
0-6	6.1	4.2	2.6		
7-12	63.0	56.8	49.3		
13-16	25.1	30.8	37.8		
17-20	5.8	8.1	10.3	Gamma=.19	p=.000
Television Viewing Habits					
Nonviewers	4.6	4.9	3.6		
Light Viewers	46.1	43.9	47.4		
Heavy Viewers	44.6	45.2	43.9		
Excessive viewers	4.8	5.9	5.1	Gamma=.01	p=.379
Prestige					
10-29	26.4	24.0	21.1		
30-49	52.5	50.3	50.8		
50-69	19.3	23.3	24.2		
70-89	1.8	2.5	3.9	Gamma=.09	p=.000

Although the average hours people spent watching television over the years had increased slightly (Hao, 1994), no significant changes took place in the categories of television viewing habits listed here. Therefore, the possibility that changes in people's confidence in television over the years could be accounted by changes in

people's television viewing habits can be dismissed.

Because job prestige and income can be highly associated with people's education, their relationships with education were first examined. The results show that when the educational factor is under control, people with higher income tend to trust television less, excluding the influence of education. People who have received the same level of education differ in their attitudes towards television if they differ in income. People with higher income tend to have less trust in television. The only exception was found among people who have received only primary school education or less. See Table 5 for details.

Table 5
Crosstabulation of
Confidence and Income with Education under Control

Income	Confidence in TV: Great Deal(%)	Only Some(%)	Hardly Any(%)	Stat.	Sig.
(Education=0-6 years)					
Over 25K	22.0	53.7	24.4		
Up to 25K	25.9	59.3	14.8		
Up to 20K	14.0	58.0	28.0		
Up to 15K	26.3	51.8	21.9		
Under 10K	27.0	50.5	22.5	Gamma=.06	p=.379
(Education=7-12 years)					
Over 25K	11.5	60.1	28.5		
Up to 25K	15.5	59.0	25.5		
Up to 20K	15.5	60.0	24.4		
Up to 15K	18.7	57.7	23.5		
Under 10K	23.3	55.2	21.5	Gamma=.14	p=.000
(Education=13-16 years)					
Over 25K	8.4	57.9	33.6		
Up to 25K	11.1	57.9	31.0		
Up to 20K	13.5	57.2	29.3		
Up to 15K	15.1	57.1	27.8		
Under 10K	16.1	55.1	28.8	Gamma=.11	p=.000
(Education=17-20 years)					
Over 25K	6.4	55.5	38.2		
Up to 25K	10.6	53.7	35.6		
Up to 20K	8.9	60.7	30.4		
Up to 15K	6.1	70.6	23.3		
Under 10K	13.7	50.7	35.6	Gamma=.10	p=.001

The crosstabulation of people's confidence in television and job prestige with education under control produced inconsistent results. While the overall pattern shows that people who have the same educational level but hold jobs of higher prestige tend to have less confidence in television, it is not true for all categories of people in terms of education. Such an inconsistent

pattern makes job prestige a questionable factor in explaining changes in people's confidence in television. Please see Table 6 for details.

Table 6
Crosstabulation of Confidence
in TV and Income with Education under Control

Job Prestige	Confidence in TV: Great Deal(%)	Only Some(%)	Hardly Any(%)	Stat.	Sig.
(Education=0-6 years)					
70-89	00.0	00.0	00.0		
50-69	39.3	50.0	10.7		
30-49	22.4	53.2	24.4		
10-29	27.8	49.7	22.5	Gamma=.04	p=.825
(Education=7-12 years)					
70-89	5.4	67.9	26.8		
50-69	12.3	62.6	25.1		
30-49	16.8	58.1	25.1		
10-29	21.1	56.4	22.5	Gamma=.10	p=.000
(Education=13-16 years)					
70-89	10.6	55.8	33.6		
50-69	10.8	58.0	31.2		
30-49	11.8	58.0	31.2		
10-29	17.3	56.9	25.9	Gamma=.07	p=.0003
(Education=17-20 years)					
70-89	13.8	48.6	37.7		
50-69	7.0	59.7	33.4		
30-49	7.5	59.3	33.2		
10-29	23.9	47.8	28.3	Gamma=.03	p=.362

Because both people's income and education increased over the years, their influence must be excluded in order to find out if the overall decrease in people's confidence in television could be solely explained by changes in their education and income. To accomplish this, people's

confidence in television was again crosstabulated with the three periods covered, with educational and income differences under control.

With personal income under control, not much significant change was found in people's confidence in television over the three time periods. Among those earning $25,000 a year or less, there were no significant changes. Among those earning more than $25,000, a significant relationship was found but such a relationship was neither strong nor consistent. Although there was a consistent increase in the percentage of people who had hardly any confidence in television, the proportion of people who had a great deal of confidence dropped from 12.5 percent in the 1970s to 8.9 percent in the 1980s and then increased slightly to 9.3 percent in the 1990s. See Table 7 for details.

Table 7
Changes of TV Confidence
during Three Periods with Income under Control

Confidence in TV	70s(%)	80s(%)	90s(%)	Stat.	Sig.
(Income=Under 10K)					
Great Deal	23.1	21.1	20.1		
Only Some	54.3	55.2	53.4		
Hardly Any	22.6	23.7	26.5	Gamma=.05	p=.017
(Income=Up to 15K)					
Great Deal	17.5	17.7	16.6		
Only Some	58.8	57.3	55.4		
Hardly Any	23.7	25.0	28.0	Gamma=.03	p=.272
(Income=Up to 20K)					
Great Deal	14.1	14.4	16.3		
Only Some	61.5	57.6	55.2		
Hardly Any	24.4	28.0	28.5	Gamma=.04	p=.175
(Income=Up to 25K)					
Great Deal	12.8	13.7	16.7		
Only Some	55.1	60.9	55.1		
Hardly Any	32.1	25.4	28.2	Gamma=-.09	p=.015
(Income=Over 25K)					
Great Deal	12.5	8.9	9.3		
Only Some	58.9	59.6	54.9		
Hardly Any	28.7	31.5	35.8	Gamma=.09	p=.000

Next, the relationship between people's confidence and the passage of time was examined with education under control. No significant changes were found among people with only primary school education or less, but people with higher education showed changes in their attitude towards television. Even when the education factor was held constant, a decline was still found in people's confidence in television. See Table 8 for details.

Table 8
Changes of Confidence in TV over Three Periods
with Education under Control

Confidence in TV	70s(%)	80s(%)	90s(%)	Stat.	Sig.
(Education=0-6 years)					
Great Deal	30.0	22.9	14.3		
Only Some	47.8	52.8	61.4		
Hardly Any	22.3	24.3	24.3	Gamma=.12	p=.012
(Education=7-12 years)					
Great Deal	20.3	16.3	17.5		
Only Some	57.1	58.7	54.1		
Hardly Any	22.6	25.0	28.4	Gamma=.08	p=.000
(Education=13-16 years)					
Great Deal	13.4	11.4	9.8		
Only Some	57.4	57.9	56.5		
Hardly Any	29.2	15.4	5.6	Gamma=.07	p=.000
(Education=17-20 years)					
Great Deal	11.6	7.2	6.3		
Only Some	60.0	55.5	50.3		
Hardly Any	28.3	37.3	43.4	Gamma=.19	p=.000

Discussion

The results of this study challenge the popular belief that television is a more credible medium than the print, which was supported by many past studies. However, this does not mean that past researchers were all wrong in their conclusions. The explanation for the difference is likely to lie in the criteria used for judgment rather than fundamental differences in the samples used.

As mentioned earlier, different researchers examining media credibility issue tend to use different criteria for judgment, which are implied in the way the questions are phrased

or the specified conditions under which such comparison is made. For example, Abel and Wirth (1977) compared the two media in terms of local news coverage, Lee (1978) focused on conflicting or different reports of the same story, and Gaziano and McGrath (1985b) focused on news reports of conflict, the sole source and reliability for news. In the General Social Surveys, however, the questions regarding confidence in the media were asked in a general manner and without specific conditions. The respondents were left free to use their own criteria to rate different media separately. While past researchers were probably right in concluding that people sometimes trust TV news more than newspaper reporting, that could not be taken as an answer to the question which medium is more trustworthy when their overall performance is compared.

If we ignore the argument about how to define the term "credibility" and under what conditions the two media should be compared, the fact that more and more people are reluctant to say that they have a great deal of confidence in television deserves attention from both the television industry and communication scholars. The decline of people's confidence in television as a mass communication channel both over the years and the three time periods has made it hard to deny that television faces a credibility problem as serious as, if not more than, what the print media have to deal with.

Although Americans' confidence in television and the press has experienced ups and downs over the years, the overall comparison shows that Americans trust television less than the press. The gap between television and the press in terms of people's confidence has certainly been reduced in the 1990s compared with the 1970s and 1980s, but that was a result of the more drastic decline of press credibility rather than a gain by television in its

believability. That television has been quickly catching up with the press in winning people's trust cannot hide the fact the proportion of people who have had a great deal of confidence in television has dropped from 18.6 percent in the 1970s to 13.3 percent in the 1990s while the percentage of people who have had hardly any confidence in television has increased from 24.6 percent to 31.9 percent during the same period.

As mentioned earlier, the issue of media credibility has been tackled with two different approaches -- focusing on the performance of the media themselves and focusing on the changing audience. There is no denying that the decline of media credibility can be a result of the changing media themselves. An irresponsible press and unethical practices by journalists can contribute to people's distrust of the media. A report commissioned by the American Society of Newspaper Editors (*Chicago Tribune*, 1985), for instance, listed some key aspects of the credibility problem. These include failure to show enough concern for how ordinary people might be hurt by news coverage, "personal biases of reporters shown up in their news stories; reporters being rude and having patronizing attitudes," and "the news media giving more coverage to stories that support their point of view."

On the other hand, the demographic changes on the part of the audience may also affect their perception of media credibility even though the quality of mass media remains more or less unchanged. By analyzing the GSS data, this study confirms what has been suggested in earlier studies, i.e., people of varying characteristics tended to place different amounts of trust in the media. Of the various demographic variables covered by the GSS, the amount of television viewing was found positively related to viewers' confidence in television while education, income and job prestige were found to be negatively related to

their confidence in television. The longitudinal nature of the GSS data lends more support to the social categories perspective in explaining public reaction to the media.

Because it was found that the amount of time people spent watching television has not changed significantly, the possibility that it may have a significant impact on the changes in television credibility over the years can be excluded. In addition, if people's television viewing time had increased, it should have boosted rather than reduced people's confidence in television. Therefore, changes in people's television viewing habits should not be used to account for the decline of people's trust in television during the three time periods.

The remaining three variables, education, income and job prestige are all negatively related to people's confidence in television. People with better education, greater income and higher job prestige tend to be more critical and place less trust in the media. However, the three variables are not totally independent of each other. People with higher education tend to have a greater chance to earn more and hold more prestigious jobs. Job prestige appears to have little impact on people's confidence in television with education under control. This indicates that the direct relationship found between confidence in television and job prestige might have been contaminated by education and other variables which better indicate the critical ability of the audience.

Income as a variable has shown a strong relationship with people's confidence in television even with educational levels under control, indicating that people's income has a direct or indirect relationship with their confidence in television. While a causal relationship between income and confidence in television cannot be inferred from the results, income serves well as an

indicator of the critical ability of the audience. It is possible that people with higher income tend to enjoy a wider range of information sources to double check what they learn from the media, or they can be better informed or entertained through other means not available to people with lower income. Such hypotheses, however, could not be tested with the data used for this study.

That education influences a person's perception of media credibility has become more or less an established fact. Because this analysis of GSS data has found that Americans' education and income have significantly increased in the past two decades, it suggests that television's decrease in its credibility rating is partially due to the changes of these two factors.

To see if the decline in people's trust in television could also be attributed to television's own performance, demographic changes in the audience that may lead to their distrust of television must be excluded. Although no strong significant changes were found in the respondents' confidence in television over the years when the factor of income was controlled, the decline of television credibility could still be demonstrated when the effects of education were controlled. That shows the decline of confidence in television cannot be attributed to the increase in Americans' critical ability alone. Internal factors, i.e., changes in television's performance, as well as changes in the audience, should be explored to account for the decline in television's credibility ratings.

In conclusion, this analysis of representative longitudinal national survey data posed a serious challenge to the common belief that television is more trusted by Americans than the print media. Although television may enjoy some advantage in reporting news over the newspaper, it actually does not enjoy as

much trust as the newspaper when the overall performance is evaluated. The credibility of television is also declining and such a decline cannot be simply explained by the increasingly more discerning American public alone.

Notes

(1) Television viewing time, ranging from 0 to 24 hours, was recoded into four categories: non-viewers, those who claimed they did not watch TV at all; light viewers, those who watched television between one and two hours a day; heavy viewers, those who watched TV between three and six hours a day; excessive viewers, those who watched TV more than seven hours a day. Job prestige was recoded into four categories: 10 through 29, 30 through 49, 50 through 69, and 70 through 89. Education, ranging from 0 to 20 years, was recoded into four categories: 0-6 years, 7-12 years, 13-16 years and 17 to 20 years. Personal income, originally classified into 12 categories, was recoded into five: under $10,000, $10,001 to $15,000, $15,001 to $20,000; $20,001 to $25,000, and over $25,000. The frequency of reading a newspaper was recoded into three categories: very often (every day or a few times a week), sometimes (once or less than once a week), and never. Work status was recoded into four categories: employed, jobless, retired and homemaker.

(2) For mobility, respondents were asked if, by the time they were 16 years old, they had lived in the same city, different city in the same state, or different state in the same country.

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Broadcast Journalism Education: A Nationwide Survey of Television News Directors and Academics

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Radio/Television Division

Abstract

**Broadcast Journalism Education:
A Nationwide Survey of News Directors and Academics**

A nationwide study provided an examination of broadcast journalism education of greater depth than any performed since the Oregon Report. Sixty broadcast journalism educators and 260 TV news directors were surveyed by mail.

This is the first study to reveal a convergence of opinions of industry professionals and academics regarding the best type of curriculum to prepare students for a first job and success in the industry; however, their reasons for preferring that curriculum differed.

Broadcast Journalism Education: A Nationwide Survey of Television News Directors and Academics

It has been more than a decade since the heralded University of Oregon's "Planning for Curricular Change: A Report on the Future of Journalism and Mass Communication Education" (The Oregon Report, 1984) drove a deep wedge between the concepts of a general journalism education and a professionally-oriented education.

Since the Oregon report, however, little research has sought to determine the relationship between the broadcast journalism industry and university broadcast journalism education despite the fact that both the industry and academia have continuously evolved technologically and professionally.

Whereas previous studies indicated that academics and news directors held different opinions of the best way to educate broadcast journalism students, this study revealed a convergence of the beliefs of industry professionals and educators. This study sought to provide a current gage of academics' and industry professionals' opinions regarding broadcast journalism education and its relationship to the broadcast journalism industry. It is an examination of broadcast journalism education of greater breadth and depth than any performed since the Oregon Report; furthermore, it is an in-depth look into a long-standing controversy referred to as the curriculum debate, which has not received a probing assessment in the eight years since the Oregon Report was revisited.

On one side of the curriculum debate are the proponents of skills-oriented

education: on the other are advocates of liberal arts education, whose beliefs are grounded in neohumanism, the founding principles of the university.

Neohumanism was a direct descendent of humanism, which, according to definition is "the intellectual and secular movement that stemmed from the study of classical culture and culture during the Middle Ages and was one of the driving forces behind the Renaissance" (Webster's New World Dictionary, 1990, p. 633). Neohumanism had a profound influence on the German educational system. Neohumanists believed that understanding ancient culture and people is the reason for the existence of a higher order, or higher education.

The lower order, according to the Neohumanist philosophy, said Gossman, cultivates human capacities "for the useful knowledge and practical skills required by the majority for the day-to-day business of life, for trade, industry or agriculture" (Gossman, 1990, p. 105). Neohumanists believe that higher capacities, or human thought and creativity, should be developed through higher education while lower capacities should not.

Neohumanist theory still drives the concept of liberal arts education today. Students who focus their attention on liberal arts disciplines such as philosophy or history are engaged, according to Neohumanists, in a true higher order of study.

Some students, however, aspire to pursue careers in skills-oriented professions, such as broadcast journalism. To prepare students for these disciplines, many universities or colleges offer skills-oriented courses in the respective areas of study.

A debate over university education, in a sense, surrounds the issue of which capacities should be developed in the university -- the lower order, both the lower and higher order or, as it was originally intended, only the higher order capacities of students.

The controversy over curriculum is the subject of many books, trade press and scholarly journal articles, and opinion studies. Few of these sources argue for maintaining the dominant curriculum structure. Most sources posited that a curricular change is coming or is desperately needed ("The Oregon Project," 1983; Dorfman, 1984; Friendly, 1984; "The Oregon Project," 1987; Mullins, 1987; Dickson and Sellmeyer, 1992).

On one side of the curriculum debate lie advocates of a broad-scoped liberal arts education ("The Oregon Project," 1983; "The Oregon Project," 1987; Mullins, 1987; Dickson and Sellmeyer, 1992). The other side of the curriculum debate entails a completely professional method of training for students - training that resembles that of a trade school (Dorfman, 1984; Friendly, 1984).

The latter perspective may motivate a broadcast journalism department chairperson to expand the program's number of skills courses or incorporate a broadcast journalism laboratory experience into the program curriculum.

Broadcast journalism laboratory experiences have become an integral part of the curriculum in university journalism programs across the country. The experience is an intensive course in which students spend one or more days out of the school week working as a news team to produce a regularly scheduled newscast. The course

is usually at least one semester long. Many broadcast journalism laboratory experiences train students in both TV and radio journalism. This study focuses specifically on the television portion of the broadcast journalism laboratory experience.

Prior to the release of the Oregon Report (The Oregon Report, 1984), McBath and Burhans contradicted the persisting myth that "higher education is largely non-career oriented" while arguing that, regardless of what system of education did indeed exist, the most viable education would satisfy "requirements for both liberal perspective and professional competence" (McBath and Burhans, 1978, p. 32).

The authors of the Oregon Report saw the "general state of journalism and mass communication education [as] dismal" (The Oregon Report, 1984, p. 1). The report pointed to discouraging financial, personnel and structural situations, such as grossly under funded programs paired with massive enrollments; small, overworked faculties with little power outside the program and segmented programs that offered far too much career training (The Oregon Report, 1984).

The authors of the report saw serious flaws in the industry model, the framework under which journalism schools tended to operate (The Oregon Report, 1984). "Students are taught the entry-level skills they will need to secure their first jobs in a single, specific communication industry such as newspaper or broadcasting. Reliance on the industry model, however, does not give students the sufficient understanding of the media as a whole that they will need to advance later in their careers" (The Oregon Report, 1984, p. 16).

Blanchard and Christ added the newest dimension to the debate over journalism curriculum with Media Education and the Liberal Arts: a Blueprint for the New Professionalism (Blanchard and Christ, 1993). Blanchard and Christ's recommendations appear similar to those of the authors of "Planning for Curricular Change: A Report on the Future of Journalism and Mass Communication Education" because they are, in part, based on the report's holistic concept.

The New Professionalism, like the 1984 Oregon report, seeks to, "join and balance the individual pursuit of depth and specialty in the major with the community goals and breadth and unity of knowledge of general education" (Blanchard and Christ, 1993, p. 46). Blanchard and Christ's focus in Media Education and the Liberal Arts: A Blueprint for the New Professionalism was on academia: the academics provided little insight into the relationship between the broadcast journalism industry and university broadcast journalism programs.

The opinions of professionals (i.e. news directors and editors) concerning journalism education have been the focus of numerous survey studies conducted over the past two decades (Oliver, 1977; Fisher, 1978; Jankowski, 1980; Gaddis, 1981; Della-Giustina, 1985; Giles, 1990; Bales, 1992).

Everette Dennis stated in his 1983 article "Journalism education: Storm swirls on campus; changes coming" that the vast majority of news employees at American newspapers were educated in journalism schools yet "many leading editors openly scorn journalism education" (Dennis, 1983, p. 6). Dennis claimed the criticism came in "three inconsistent strains:"

> One says that pure liberal arts education without journalism courses is far superior to the journalism liberal arts balance. Another says journalism schools teach too much theory and not enough practice. Still another says journalism schools are too vocational (Dennis, 1983, p. 6).

Data collected through opinion survey studies have indeed revealed varying, even opposing criticisms of broadcast journalism education by industry professionals (Oliver, 1977; Fisher, 1978; Jankowski, 1980; Gaddis, 1981; Della-Giustina, 1985; Giles, 1990; Bales, 1992).

Purpose of the Study

This study is unique because it provides an nationwide examination of the opinions of both educators and industry professionals, whereas studies performed over the past decade have focused on only one group or the other. The overall objectives of this study were: 1) to determine the current emphasis broadcast journalism education programs place on practical vs. liberal arts courses 2) to grasp a firm understanding of the current opinions of both educators and industry professionals regarding the appropriate balance of liberal arts and practical courses in broadcast journalism curricula 3) to determine whether industry professionals and educators believe a more practical or a more liberal arts curriculum will help students enter the broadcast news industry and succeed in their careers.

Industry professionals and educators may in fact agree that certain types of curricula are more effective in bringing students both long-term and short-term success as broadcast journalists. If the two groups disagree, however, then students are educated to meet the standards of educators, not news directors. As the students

then attempt to move from the academic world into the professional world they may face the prospect of being well-educated but not adequately prepared for their first TV news job.

Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. Do TV news directors and academics in the 1990's hold significantly different beliefs regarding the type of curriculum that best prepares students to be successful broadcast journalists and if so why?

2. Do TV news directors and academics in the 1990s hold significantly different beliefs regarding the type of curriculum that best prepares students to get their first TV news job and if so why?

3. Does curriculum type have an impact on the hiring inclinations of TV news directors?

Methodology

To address the research questions, a national survey of academics - chairpersons of broadcast journalism sequences from the Accrediting Council of Educators in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) accredited programs and television news directors from the most recent listing of active members of the Radio Television News Directors Association (RTNDA) was conducted by mail. RTNDA members and chairpersons of ACEJMC-accredited journalism programs were chosen as research subjects because these groups are the most comprehensive in their respected areas.

Sixty academics and 260 television news directors were randomly sampled. Both samples were stratified to ensure that all genders, races and sizes of television stations or academic institutions were represented. To increase response rate, a

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number of subjects who did not respond to the first mailing were sent a second copy of the survey by facsimile. After the initial and follow-up surveys, a total of 36 (60%) academics and 84 (32%) news directors.

Of the news director respondents, 11 subjects (13%) were from TV stations in large media markets (ADI 1-30), 25 subjects (30%) were from stations in medium markets (ADI 31-100) and 48 (57%) subjects were from stations in small media markets (ADI 101+).

More than one third (36%) of news director respondents were from the southeast, 29% worked in the northeast, 25% represented the northwest and 10% were from the southwest U.S.. The news directors were selected from the most recent listing of active members of RTNDA.

Thirty-six academics responded to the survey. Of these respondents, the largest percentage (42% or 15 of 36) were from medium size universities, while 33% (11 of 36) represented large universities and 25% (9 of 36) were chairpersons at small institutions. Most were from public (75% or 27 of 36) as opposed to private universities; more than one third of academic respondents (36% or 12 of 36) came from the southeast, while 31% (10 of 36) were from the southwest, 28% (9 of 36) were from the northeast and 6% (2 of 36) were from schools in the northwest region of the U.S..

Two similar questionnaires were created, one for news director respondents and one for academics. Section A of both questionnaires sought biographical and professional information. Section A also asked subjects to respond to various

questions regarding the broadcast journalism laboratory experience. Section B on both questionnaires asked the respondents to answer several questions regarding five tables that contained descriptions of types of education that closely resembled ACEJMC-accredited curricula. The curricula were identified as Type A, Type B, Type C, Type D and Type E:

> Type A Curriculum - Capstone Semester: Five-Day-a-Week Television News - Laboratory Experience which included 18 to 24 hours of preparatory journalism courses, 12 hours of intensive television news laboratory experience and 90 hours of non-journalism courses.
>
> Type B Curriculum - One-Day-a-Week-Television News Laboratory Experience which included 27 to 33 hours of preparatory journalism courses, 3 hours of television news laboratory experience and 90 hours of non-journalism courses.
>
> Type C Curriculum - Liberal Arts/Journalism Major, which included 30 to 36 hours of journalism courses, no hours of intensive television news laboratory experience and 90 hours of non-journalism courses.
>
> Type D Curriculum - Liberal Arts/Journalism Course Work, which included 15 hours of journalism courses, zero hours of television news laboratory experience and 105 to 111 hours of non-journalism courses.
>
> Type E Curriculum - Classic Liberal Arts, which included zero hours of journalism courses, zero hours of intensive television news laboratory experience and 120 to 126 hours of non-journalism courses.
>
> All five curricula tables contained a total of 120 to 126 hours.

For the news directors, the first question in Section B asked respondents to rank the five curricula on how well they believe the curricula prepared students to be successful broadcast journalists, with one being the best and five being the worst. Next the respondents were asked to briefly explain why they ranked (1) as their first choice.

The second question in Section B asked the respondents to rank the curricula,

again from one to five, on how well they believe the curricula prepared students to obtain their first TV news job. For comparison purposes, the respondents were then asked to briefly explain why they ranked (1) as their first choice on this question.

In the academic questionnaire, Section B was almost identical to Section B of the news directors' questionnaire with one exception. A third question was asked of the academic respondents: "Which type of curriculum most clearly resembles your own program?" The questions asked in Section B of the news director questionnaire as well as the curricula tables were identical to the other questions asked in Section B of the academic questionnaire.

Findings

Respondents' Opinions Regarding Education and Experience

When asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement *"The more educated a person is, the more likely that person will be a successful broadcast journalist,"* more TV news director respondents (62%) than academic respondents (55%) agreed; however, more academic (64%) than TV news director respondents (56%) agreed with the statement *"The more educated a person is, the more likely that person will obtain their first TV news job."* Six of ten (60%) TV news director respondents agreed with the statement *"The more educated a person is, the more likely I would hire that person for a TV news job at my station."*

A much greater percentage of TV news directors indicated that *experience*, rather than *education*, was the key to a person's success as a broadcast journalist and to their obtaining a first TV news job. In fact more than eight of ten (84%) TV news

directors agreed with the statement *"The more experience a person has in TV news, the more likely that person will be a successful broadcast journalist,"* more than nine of ten (92%) agreed with the statement *"The more experience a person has, the more likely that person will obtain their first TV news job"* and 95% of all TV news director respondents agreed with the statement *"The more experience a person has, the more likely I would hire that person for a TV news job at my station."* While nine of ten academic respondents agreed with the statement *"The more experience a person has in TV news, the more likely that person will obtain their first TV news job,"* only 64% of academic respondents agreed with the statement *"The more experience a person has, the more likely that person will be a successful broadcast journalist."*

News director and academic respondents varied in what they believed are the most important factors to help students obtain their first TV news job. Compilation of open ended responses indicated that nearly half (48%) of all news director respondents said "experience, in the form of internships or laboratory experiences," is most important; 16% of news director respondents said "polished journalism/technical skills" was most important, while fewer percentages said "education," "professional competence," "talent," "intelligence," "quality of experience" or good ideas" were the most important factors in determining whether a recent college graduate would get a TV news job.

One quarter (25%) of all academic respondents said they believed "experience, in the form of internships or laboratory experience," was the most important factor, one quarter (25%) said specifically that an "internship" was most important; fewer

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percentages of academic respondents said that a "good demo tape," (14%) "polished journalism/technical skills" (14%) or "education" (14%) was the most important factor in determining whether recent college graduates get a TV news job.

Television News Director Respondents' Curriculum Choices

When asked to rank the five curriculum types from 1 to 5, with five being the best curriculum type to prepare students to become successful broadcast journalists, three-fourths (75%) of news director respondents ranked *Type A curriculum - the Capstone semester: Five-Day-a Week Television News Laboratory Experience* as the best type.

Nearly three quarters (75%) of all news director respondents ranked *Type B curriculum - One-Day-a-Week Television News Laboratory Experience* (70%) as the second best type for preparing students to be successful broadcast journalists, *Type C - Liberal Arts/Journalism Major* (74%) as third best and *Type D - Liberal Arts/Journalism Course Work* (74%) as fourth best. *Type E curriculum - Classic Liberal Arts* was ranked by 86% of respondents as the worst type of curriculum for preparing students to be successful broadcast journalists.

In an open-ended question, it was statistically significant that when asked why they chose their first choice as the best type of curriculum to prepare students to be successful broadcast journalists, more than half of the respondents (56%) who chose *Type A* said they did so because the curriculum provided necessary "hands-on training." As indicated in Table 1, the remaining respondents who chose *Type A* said they selected the curriculum type for a number of other reasons, ranging from "it

combines both knowledge and skills training," "introduces students to real-life deadline pressure" or "offers the most intensive laboratory experience."

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

TV News Director Respondents' Choices Of Best Curriculum Type To Prepare Students To Obtain Their First TV News Jobs

Nearly six of ten respondents (58%) chose *Type A - Capstone Semester - Five-Day-A-Week Television News Laboratory Experience* as their first choice of curriculum for preparing students to obtain their first TV news job because it "provided necessary hands-on training." Respondents who chose *Type B - One-Day-A-Week Television News Laboratory Experience* said they did so because that type "provides necessary hands-on experience," "produces well-rounded students" or "combines knowledge and skills training." Those who chose *Type C - Liberal Arts/Journalism Major* did so because they felt it "prepared students well for future careers as broadcast journalists" or "produces well-rounded students" and *Type D - Liberal Arts/Journalism Course Work* because it "produces well-rounded students" or "combines knowledge and skills training." The respondent that chose *Type E - Classic Liberal Arts* as the best type of curriculum to prepare students to obtain their first TV news job did not explain why he selected that as his first choice. When cross-tabulated with respondents' choice of the best type of curriculum to prepare students for the first TV news jobs, respondents' reasons for selecting their first choice of curriculum for preparing students to obtain their first TV news job are statistically significant. The percentages are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Academic Respondents' Choices of Best Curriculum Type To Prepare Students To Be Successful Broadcast Journalists

When asked to rank the five curriculum types from 1 to 5, with one being the best curriculum type to prepare students to become successful broadcast journalists and five being the worst, seven of ten academic respondents chose *Type A - Capstone Semester - Five-Day-A-Week Television News Laboratory Experience* as the best type of curriculum. The academic respondents ranked the curriculum type in the same way as the news director respondents -- *Type B - One-Day-A-Week Television News Laboratory Experience* was ranked as the second best curriculum type, *Type C - Liberal Arts/Journalism Major* as the third best, *Type D - Liberal Arts/Journalism Course Work* as fourth and *Type E - Classic Liberal Arts* as the fifth best type of curriculum to prepare students to be successful broadcast journalists.

As shown in Table 3, the majority of respondents who chose *Type A* did so either because it "provided necessary hands-on training" or "combined knowledge and skills training." Those that chose *Type B* or *Type C* as the best curriculum type said they did so because it "combined knowledge and skills training" or "produced well-rounded students."

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Academic Respondents' Choices of Best Curriculum Type To Prepare Students To Curriculum Type to Obtain Their First TV News Jobs

More than eight of ten academic respondents (83%) also ranked *Type A -*

Capstone Semester - Five-Day-A-Week Television News Laboratory Experience as the best curriculum type to prepare students to obtain their first TV news job. Once again, *Type B - One-Day-A-Week Television News Laboratory Experience* was ranked as the second best type, *Type C - Liberal Arts/Journalism Major* as third best, *Type D - Liberal Arts/ Journalism Course Work* as fourth best and *Type E - Classic Liberal Arts* as the fifth best type of curriculum to prepare students to obtain their first TV news job.

As shown in Table 4, the majority of respondents who chose *Type A - Capstone Semester - Five-Day-A-Week News Laboratory Experience* said they did so because it "provided necessary hands-on training," combined "knowledge and skills training" or "allowed students to build a demo tape." Those that chose *Type B - One-Day-A-Week News Laboratory Experience* did so because it "combined knowledge and skills training" or "convinced employers that the student has prepared for their first broadcast news job." Those that chose *Type C - Liberal Arts/Journalism Major* said they did so because it "combined knowledge and skills training."

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

Academic Respondents' Type of Broadcast Journalism Program

The majority of academic respondents said their programs most closely resembled *Type B - One-Day-a-Week Television News Laboratory Experience* (61%), or *Type A - The Capstone Semester Five-Day-a-Week Television News Laboratory Experience* (31%). The remaining 8% of respondents said their program curriculum most resembled *Type C - Liberal Arts/Journalism Major curriculum.*

Nearly nine of ten respondents (89%) said their program offered a broadcast news laboratory experience that allowed their broadcast journalism students to produce a regularly scheduled television news program. Nearly half of respondents (45%) said their TV journalism laboratory experience produced one half-hour news entertainment show per week; 29% said their lab experience produced two half-hour shows per week; 10% said their lab experience produces one half-hour news entertainment show daily, 6% said their students produced news entertainment shows that ran two times a day, although the students did not produce a news show each day, another 6% said their lab experience resulted in one news magazine show broadcast at the end of each month and 3% said their laboratory experience produced shows that ran two times a day, four days a week, although a news show was not produced each day.

TV News Director Respondents' Inclinations To Hire Graduates of Particular Universities

When asked if they were inclined to hire graduates from particular universities, roughly half (51%) of all news director respondents said "yes." Nearly seven of ten respondents who earned master's degrees (67%) and 100% of respondents who spent time in graduate school but did not finish said they were inclined to hire students from a particular university(ies); of those who never pursued a master's degree, 44% said they were inclined to hire students of a particular university(ies).

Nearly one third of respondents (27%) said they were inclined to hire graduates from the University of Missouri at Columbia, while 10% said they were inclined to hire graduates of Northwestern University and 7% said they were inclined

to hire University of Florida graduates. Respondents also listed twenty-three other universities, however, these institutions were only selected by 1 or 2 respondents, generally because the university and respondents' stations were in close proximity.

The majority of respondents who chose the University of Missouri said they did so because the school's broadcast journalism laboratory experience provided students with "hands-on experience (52%)." More than six of ten (63%) of respondents who chose Northwestern University did so because its broadcast journalism program is "of high quality;" nearly seven of ten (67%) of the respondents who said they were inclined to hire students from the University of Florida said they were so inclined because the program provides "hands-on training" through a broadcast journalism laboratory experience.

Discussion and Implications

Unlike the Oregon Report and other studies of broadcast journalism education, the results of this study indicate that TV news directors and academics hold similar beliefs regarding the type of curriculum that best prepares students to be successful broadcast journalists. Also, TV news directors and academics hold similar beliefs regarding the type of curriculum that best prepares students to get their first TV news job. However, news director and academic respondents did vary in their responses as to why they chose *Type A - Capstone Semester* as the best curriculum type.

TV news directors tended to chose Type A because it provided the hands-on training necessary to both prepare students for successful careers and help them

acquire their first TV news job. Approximately 20% of academic respondents also said they selected *Type A* because it offered necessary skills training. A greater percentage of academics than news directors, however, chose *Type A* because it fused knowledge and hands-on experience into one curriculum.

Also, curriculum type did appear to have an impact on the hiring inclinations of television news directors. While just more than half (51%) of news directors surveyed said they were inclined to hire students from particular universities, nearly one out of four of those who were so inclined said they preferred to hire students from the University of Missouri or the University of Florida, both of which offer extensive broadcast journalism laboratory experiences.

It appears that, while TV news directors prefer *Type A* because of the experience it offers, academics chose that type because it produces a student whose skills and intellect are balanced. These findings contradict past research, such as the Oregon Report, that indicated industry professionals and academics favored more of an emphasis on the liberal arts because skills-oriented curricula were not supplying students with enough intellect or knowledge about the world outside the newsroom. Judging from the lull in the curriculum debate, one can assume that the five-day-a-week news laboratory experience is gaining proponents that may have previously viewed such a curriculum as too "practical."

This study suggests that, while some education critics may be stoking the curriculum debate, there is very little debate between academics and industry professionals. The fact that 32 of 36 broadcast journalism academics said their

programs have a TV news laboratory experience of some sort indicates that a growing number of programs are giving industry professionals what they have asked for for years -- graduates who are trained and ready to work.

But although many academics say they believe a five-day-a-week broadcast news laboratory experience is the best type of curriculum to both prepare students for their first TV news job and for success in the broadcast news industry, most have not implemented such an extensive laboratory experience into their program. In fact, the majority of academic respondents said their programs offer only a one-day-a-week broadcast news experience. While many academics appear to believe that a five-day-a-week lab experience would be a valuable addition to their curriculum and believe that news directors value an extensive news laboratory experience, few have made the effort to implement one; this study did not determine why few academics have implemented an extensive laboratory experience, however, it did provide strong evidence that students who graduate from schools that have implemented extensive lab experiences, such as the University of Missouri and the University of Florida, are more likely to find work in the TV news industry.

The implications that the findings of this study hold for broadcast journalism programs are serious as well. This study suggests that programs have just begun to heed the demands of the industry. TV news directors said graduates needed more skills training -- the majority of broadcast journalism programs have implemented a one-day-a-week TV news laboratory experience in their curricula. Now TV news directors say a five-day-a-week TV news laboratory experience would be even better

-- five-day-a-week news laboratory experiences may be the next step for schools throughout the country. One school that has already implemented a five-day-a-week news laboratory experience is the University of South Carolina.

South Carolina implemented the intensive laboratory experience in the fall of 1993. The course, called Senior Semester, offers 12 hours of class credit for one semester in the laboratory. Unlike other laboratory programs, the same students spend Monday through Friday during the entire semester producing a half-hour television news program that runs on the campus cable channel and a nightly half-hour radio newscast for the campus radio station. While some broadcast journalism theory is discussed early in the semester, students spend the majority of their time honing their reporting, producing and technical skills as members of a television news team.

An increasing number of five-day-a-week TV news laboratory experiences would mean that graduates of broadcast journalism programs would have the skills to get their first TV news job. It would also mean, however, that broadcast journalism programs would face excessive costs in instruction and TV equipment and maintenance and would run a greater risk of being called trade schools. Essentially, an extensive amount of skills work in a university broadcast journalism program curriculum was viewed a decade ago as too "practical;" today, it is viewed as valuable for graduates searching for their first TV news jobs, however most programs are still hesitant to implement an extensive lab experience.

Suggestions For Future Research

This study has laid the groundwork for a number of future research possibilities. First, this study provided conclusive evidence that both news directors and academics believe a five-day-a-week broadcast news laboratory experience would best prepare students for their first TV news job and for success in the TV news industry. However, this study did not identify why few schools have implemented a five-day-a-week broadcast news laboratory experience.

Secondly, future research that measures and compares the skills developed in a five-day-a-week news laboratory experience versus those developed in a one-day-a-week news lab experience could be extremely valuable both for academics and the TV news industry.

A third future research opportunity is a focus on the radio portion of a broadcast news laboratory experience. This study examined only the television portion, however, many broadcast news laboratory experiences train students in both radio and television. A similar study concentrating on the best type of curriculum to train students for the radio news industry or on the radio skills gained in various types of curriculum would benefit students, broadcast journalism programs and the radio news industry.

Many university broadcast journalism programs encourage or even require students to complete an internship. A fourth future research opportunity would be a study measuring and comparing the skills students gain in an internship versus those that they gain in a five-day-a-week news laboratory experience.

Finally, a follow-up to this study done after a period of time would be

extremely beneficial to measure changing trends in university broadcast journalism program curricula and in the perceptions of industry professionals regarding broadcast journalism education. Such a study, conducted on a regular basis, would enable educators to understand how effectively their programs are meeting the needs of students preparing to enter the ever-changing broadcast news industry.

TABLE 1

WHY NEWS DIRECTOR RESPONDENT CHOSE A PARTICULAR TYPE AS THE BEST TYPE OF CURRICULUM TO PREPARE STUDENTS TO BE SUCCESSFUL BROADCAST JOURNALISTS

WHY NEWS DIRECTOR CHOSE TYPE	CURRICULUM TYPE A	B	C	D	E
Teaches Craft	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Provides Hands on Training	56%	8%	0%	0%	0%
Prepares Students for Career	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Produces Well Rounded Student	3%	31%	100%	67%	100%
Combines Knowledge & Skills Training	23%	54%	0%	33%	0%
Intensive Lab Experience	5%	7%	0%	0%	0%
Real-life Pressure	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Develops Existing Talent	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%

N=84
$x2 = 46.77$, df = 28, $p = .0145$

TABLE 2

WHY NEWS DIRECTOR RESPONDENT CHOSE A PARTICULAR TYPE AS THE BEST TYPE OF CURRICULUM TO PREPARE STUDENTS TO OBTAIN THEIR FIRST TV NEWS JOB

WHY NEWS DIRECTOR CHOSE TYPE	CURRICULUM TYPE A	B	C	D	E
Teaches Craft	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Provides Hands on Training	58%	43%	0%	0%	0%
Prepares student for Future	6%	0%	50%	0%	0%
Produces well-Rounded Students	0%	43%	50%	75%	0%
Combines Knowledge & Skills Training	9%	14%	0%	25%	0%
Intensive Lab Experience	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Real-life Pressure	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Helps Student Find Job	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%

n = 84
X2 = 47, DF = 28, P = .0151

TABLE 3

WHY ACADEMIC RESPONDENT CHOSE A PARTICULAR TYPE AS THE BEST TYPE OF CURRICULUM TO PREPARE STUDENTS TO BE SUCCESSFUL BROADCAST JOURNALISTS

WHY ACADEMIC CHOSE TYPE	CURRICULUM TYPE A	B	C	D	E
Teaches Craft	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Successful at Helping Students Get Jobs	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Provides Necessary Hands on Training	26%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Prepares Students for Future Career	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Produces Well Rounded Students	0%	13%	50%	0%	0%
Combines Knowledge & Skills Training	26%	87%	50%	0%	0%
Intensive Lab Experience	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Most Like Actual Newsroom	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%

N = 36
$x2 = 21.009$, df = 14, p = .1014

TABLE 4

WHY ACADEMIC RESPONDENT CHOSE A PARTICULAR TYPE AS THE BEST TYPE OF CURRICULUM TO PREPARE STUDENTS TO OBTAIN THEIR FIRST TV NEWS JOB

WHY ACADEMIC CHOSE TYPE	CURRICULUM TYPE A	B	C	D	E
Teaches Craft	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Successful at Helping Students Get Job	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Provides Necessary Hands On Training	30%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Prepared Students for Future Career	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Convincing to Employer	4%	20%	0%	0%	0%
Combines Knowledge & Skills Training	22%	80%	100%	0%	0%
Intensive Lab Experience	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Helps Students Build Resume Tape	15%	0%	0%	0%	0%

N = 36
$x2 = 21.007$, df = 14, p = .1

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People in a Box:
AIDS Testing, Potter, and the Decision-Making Process of Television Journalists

Top 3 Faculty Paper

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The process of gathering news for television involves a complex array of decision-making activities. When moral ambiguity is a part of the journalistic process making a decision to take action involves a diverse array of processes and influences at the personal, organizational and professional levels. How do television journalists deal with the moral ambiguity they encounter in their work? What factors--individual, organizational, professional or otherwise--contribute to the process of decision making in the face of moral ambiguity. The purpose of this paper is to report on an observation of journalistic decision-making which uncovers attributes of the process in a television news room and then identify factors which impact the nature of the process.

Seventeen people working at television stations in Indianapolis and Terre Haute, Indiana took part in this exploration of journalistic decision making. Indianapolis is a top-30 television market and Terre Haute is categorized below the 125th. Each participant in this study encountered the same situation in a computer-based simulation. In the simulation they could access additional information, receive advice from the leaders in their newsroom, read several codes of ethics and consider thoughts about the situation from professional peers. Respondents in this study include reporters, photographers and news production personnel. The situation they faced involved the privacy of men standing outside of an AIDS testing site:

> You get back from shooting your story on confidential AIDS testing which is being provided by a local health agency. You've got some good video, lots of tight shots and wide shots in which there are people, but they cannot be identified. The sound bytes are solid with the agency director and some local AIDS activists. However, in the background of your only usable stand-up close, there are three men talking in front of the spot you have established as the testing center. If you knew these men you would be able to identify them from this video.

The situation is rather vague. This is purposeful. It forces respondents to fill in the blanks from their own knowledge and experience in order to define the important factors and deal with the moral ambiguity in the situation. After respondents had indicated their initial reaction to the

situation they were able to access the following additional information. This information was provided to fill some of the gaps and create a stronger sense of moral dilemma:

> There has been a great deal of controversy surrounding the provision of this service and the so-called anonymity of the testing. Concern has been voiced by heterosexuals and homosexuals alike as they recognize the need for this testing but fear the ramifications of breaches in confidentiality.
>
> As you review this video several people pop their heads into the editing room to say "hi" and see what's going on. With the stand-up on the screen one photographer says, "hey, I know that guy, I think he goes to my church," though he is unaware of the story you are working on.

This study is about the decision-making process in the face of moral ambiguity. The findings are the process of working through the *AIDS Testing* situation and the factors which contribute to the nature of that process. Hypothesized actions will be discussed as they relate to the decision-making process, but this study is not about what the respondents decided to do in this situation, it is about how they decided what to do.

Review of the Literature

There are two lines of journalism which are relevant to this paper: explorations of the newsgathering process and investigations of the role of ethics in journalism. Building on the work of Breed (1955) and White (1950), and their observation of the newsgathering process, Gans (1979), Tuchman (1978), and Epstein (1973) observed the processes of newsgathering and point to the structures of decision making and the factors which appear to have an influence on those processes. Research specifically dealing with journalism ethics indicates that the journalist's attempt to deal with moral ambiguity involves the process of balancing competing personal, organizational and professional values.

Gans (1979) concluded that there is an interplay of the individual, organization and profession in every decision made by a journalist:

> Journalists do apply news judgment, both as members of a profession and as individuals, but they are by no means free agents...they work within organizations which provide them with only a limited amount of leeway in selection decisions, which is further reduced by their allegiance to professionally shared values (p. 79).

This observation is supported by Tuchman (1978) in her discussion of how simplified story categorizations impact the newsgathering process:

> As professionals, reporters negotiate with colleagues in their own news organizations and with those in other organizations about coverage of specific stories and about appropriate news practices (p. 13).

Gans (1979) also reported that individual journalists often "act on the basis of quick, virtually intuitive judgments, which some ascribe to 'feel'" (p. 82), which would seem to be at odds with his previously reported finding. Tuchman (1978), however, confirmed this enigma. She said that the constraints of time and resources lead journalists to employ mental short-cuts and operate as independent agents within a newsgathering organization. These shortcuts and "virtually intuitive judgments" may be what Parsons and Smith (1988) found in the R. Budd Dwyer situation in Pennsylvania. These researchers concluded that "reified" practices were at work as television decision-makers decided how to handle video of a man committing suicide during a press conference. In other words, Parsons and Smith said journalists engage a learned set of priorities to deal with the moral ambiguities in a newsgathering situation.

Meyer (1983) also found it difficult to pinpoint a consistent structure for ethical reasoning in the print journalists he studied. He decided that :

> Certain situations invoke certain journalistic reflexes, and it may be these reflexes, rather than more complicated codes, explicit or implicit, which determine the ethical outcome (p. 25).

Wulfemeyer and McFadden (1988) explored the presence and use of the ethical codes which Meyer (1983) discounts. They concluded that the radio news directors they surveyed were

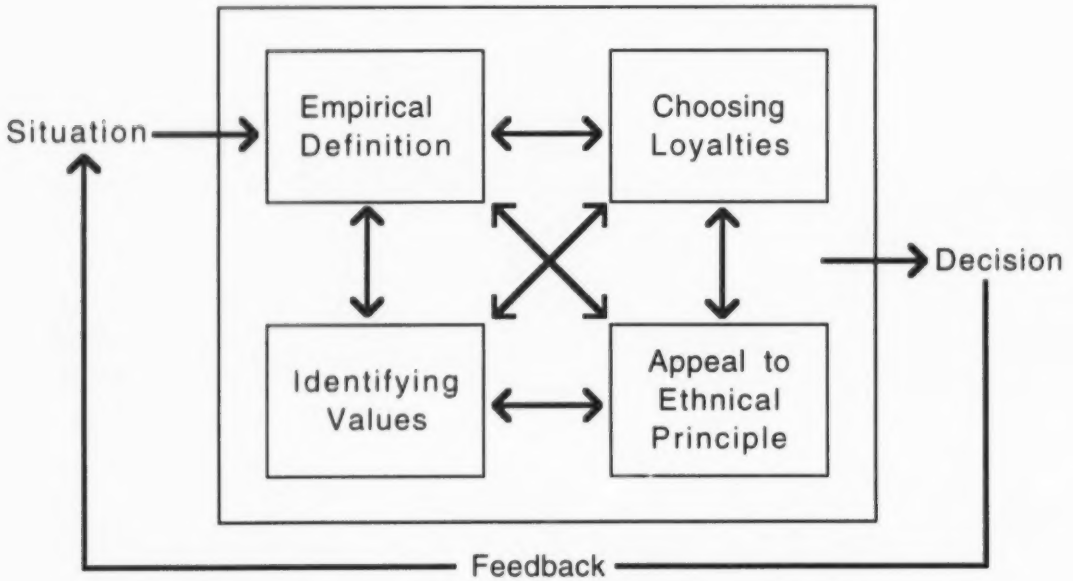
concerned about ethics because almost 40% had adopted formal codes of ethics for their newsrooms and 90% believed journalists should follow the principles set forth in the codes.

Steele (1987) found that the television news photographers which he observed were conscious of their involvement in ethical reasoning. He found that photojournalists experienced conflict between their personal ethics and what they perceived to be their duty as professional journalists. Steele (1987) said that "utilitarian" is the best word to describe the reasoning of journalists (p. 10). He concluded that television journalists weigh competing values in approaching ethical challenges.

Researchers have also looked empirically at the background variables which may have an impact on the decision-making process in the face of moral ambiguity. Weaver and Wilhoit (1986) were surprised to find that job titles and education measures did not play a role in the ethical opinions of the journalists they surveyed. They were able to establish, however, that age, experience and income had some impact on the ethical opinions of their respondents. Weaver and Wilhoit (1986) also asked journalists about the major influences on their ethical perspectives. They found that, "The most striking, but certainly not surprising, finding is the perceived importance of the newsroom context in shaping the ethics of journalists in all media, regardless of size or location" (p. 135). Smith (1985) found a limited relationship between a respondent's job title, the size of the news organization, and a ethical opinion of a respondent. Endres (1985) found that over half of the respondents in his study said they often or very often discussed ethical problems with fellow workers and 85% of those said those discussions involved their peers. Endres (1985) concluded:

> Editorial staffers' ethical values and attitudes are being influenced by the newsroom environment and by colleagues, and a socialization system, such as that described by Breed [1955] and others, is in place in U. S. daily newspapers. That system involves professional ethics as well as influences on ethical values and attitudes. How formal the system is, is not yet known (p. 54).

The research cited above supports the idea that journalists are acting individually to deal with moral ambiguity in their work. It also supports the idea that organizational and professional environment have an impact on journalistic decision-making. Yet, only a few of these studies have attempted to observe and record the role and relative influence of these factors in the decision-making process. Considering this aspect of the newsgathering process and journalism ethics literature, it is apparent that Potter (1969) provides important insight and foundation for the exploration of decision making in the face of moral ambiguity. Potter works in applied ethics and provides a structural basis for dealing with moral dilemmas. This structure is known as the "Potter Box" (Christians, et al., 1990). The Potter Box is useful in teaching how deal with moral ambiguity. It is also useful for the design of simulations and the analysis of decision making in applied settings. Potter (1969) feels that moral decision-making involves the pursuit of information and weighing that data against various values, loyalties and principles. With the Potter Box as a guide journalistic decision-making in the face of moral ambiguity involves four realms: *Definition*, *Values*, *Loyalties* and *Principles*.



Potter's Box Fig. 1.1 (adapted from Christians, et al., 1990)

In the realm of Definition Potter (1969) sees that individuals must define a situation and dilemma for themselves, so they can determine what are the "facts and potentially falsifiable predictions concerning the outcomes of alternative courses of action" (p. 23). The individual pursues all relevant information in this part of the box so that the balancing of other factors will be based on the most complete information available. This information can come from researching the facts as well as surveying the opinions of peers and supervisors. Within the Values realm is the point of conflict between professional, personal, aesthetic, socio-cultural, and other abstract ideas which are attached by the individual or organization to elements of a situation. These values can reside within individuals and their understanding of the situation. They may also be found in the individual's organization and profession and the nature of a morally-ambiguous situation.

The Loyalties realm appears at the cursory level to be analogous with Values in the Potter Box. Potter (1969) said, "Consciously or unconsciously, men make decisions regarding what shall be taken as their primary object of concern. They create expressive symbols which represent a center of value, locus of commitment, or source of identity" (p. 23). Loyalties are the practical considerations in the decision-making process, "the locus of commitment," which essentially compete with philosophically-based values for prominence in the decision-making process. Loyalties are clearly a part of the individual, but they can be modified by input from others within an organization or a profession. Principles is the final realm in the Potter Box, here the individual decides which ethical principles apply in the situation and which ethical principles dictate or support a chosen course of action. These principles can be internal, come from the advice of others or be gleaned from an objective source, such as the established ethical codes of relevant professional organizations.

Methodology

The data gathering tool for this research was a computer-based questionnaire and simulation of a newsgathering situation. Interacting with the computer respondents dealt with the situation essentially as they would in the day-to-day task of gathering news for television. Respondents

could search for more information, seek advice from superiors, find out what peers think, consult ethical codes from professional journalism organizations, or make the decision to act with complete autonomy. The computer program recorded the ways in which the respondents dealt with the situation during the course of their interaction. The computer tracked the steps taken by each respondent and acted as interviewer at the appropriate times.

The structure of the simulation is based on the Potter Box. Reading the situation was the first step in the simulation. This is where they initially formulate their Definition. Respondents were then asked to type in their initial reaction to the elements in the situation. Next respondents had the opportunity to seek advice from a variety of resources. Advisors for respondents varied by the newsroom under observation. There were six newsroom leaders who provided advice for how to deal with the situation in Indianapolis and three in Terre Haute. While anyone could provide input on Values, Loyalties and Principles these newsroom leaders were primarily available for input on Loyalties because of their managerial function within each organization. Respondents in both newsrooms could access the advice of five "peer" television journalists from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. These peers were primarily available for input on Values. The ethical codes of the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA), the Radio-Television News Directors Association (RTNDA), and the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) were also available to provide respondents with a reference point for Principles. One other resource was available to respondents in the simulation and that was additional information. This information was made accessible so that respondents could fill in some of the blanks in their Definition and to clarify some of the initial ambiguity built into the situation. In the last step of the simulation the respondents were asked to record their final decisions and give a brief explanation for their choice of action.

Before dealing with the *AIDS Testing* situation respondents completed another, dissimilar, simulation which familiarized them with the simulation process and interface. Respondents also completed a battery of demographic questions before encountering the simulations. Information was gathered in this portion of the program on the gender, age, job title, education level, media

experience, and income of each respondent. Participants also indicated if they belong to a professional journalism organization in this portion of the program.

There were five steps in the data analysis. The first step was to assemble all of the background information on the respondents. The second step was to map out the decision process of each respondent to determine which resources and pieces of advice had been accessed and how many steps they had taken in their process of dealing with the situation. The third step was to quantify elements of the decision map so that simple statistical comparisons could be executed. The fourth step was to compare the responses to the question, "what is your gut reaction to this situation?" from the initial reaction portion of the simulation, with the responses to the question, "what will you do in this situation?" from the final decision portion of the simulation. This comparison would reveal if any of there was any change in hypothesized action from the initial reaction to the final decision. The presence of change would indicate if the steps taken and information accessed had any impact on the decision process of the individual television journalist.

The final step in the data analysis was to perform statistical tests. The tests used in this study are very simple. This research is the first time a computer simulation has been used to investigate journalism ethics. The study is exploratory in nature and involves a limited sample of volunteer subjects from two television newsrooms. In accordance with the nature and scope of the study two simple statistical tests have been used to analyze the data, *t*-tests and Pearson's *r*. The *t*-tests indicate whether the difference between two means is significant and Pearson's *r* establishes whether a relationship exists between two continuous variables. The findings reported here will not statistically signify the nature of some broader population. These findings will enrich our understanding of the nature of newsgathering at these two stations and help shape questions which can be asked with larger and more diversified samples of journalists in the future.

Sample

Seventeen people worked through the simulation, eight from Indianapolis and nine from Terre Haute. The variance in market size translates directly to variance in the age and experience level of

the people working at the stations. Terre Haute is a market where television journalists find their first or second job, gain experience and then move on to a larger market. Indianapolis is a market where experienced television journalists put down roots in order to build a career. The average level of journalism experience was 16 years for respondents from Indianapolis and seven-and-a-half years for respondents from Terre Haute. Six of the respondents across the two stations worked as both reporters and anchors, three were only reporters, five were photographers, and three worked in news production, which includes editing and presentation of stories. Six of the respondents were women and eleven were men. Eight respondents were members of some organization for professional journalists.

A computer was placed at the station in Terre Haute on July 10, 1990 and at the station in Indianapolis on July 20, 1990. The computers were pulled from both stations on August 10, 1990. People in each newsroom could use the program and participate in the study at any time during that period, entering and exiting the program at their convenience. The data reported here on the *AIDS Testing* situation is a part of a larger study of ethical reasoning and the decision-making process in television journalism (Williams, 1993).

Findings

The sources of advice in *AIDS Testing* were essentially unanimous, "the stand-up must not be used because the men in the background can be identified." The three newsroom leaders in Terre Haute and the six newsroom leaders in Indianapolis agreed that this was the case. Except for one photographer the peer advisors also demonstrated consensus on what must be done in this situation. The only thing which sets this photographer apart from the total group of advisors is his vague qualification for re-shooting the stand-up, "If there is concern about seeing them on the part of management, kill the stand- up and voice over some of that 'good' video." He is the chief photographer at a station in Oklahoma City, but he is willing to concede his thought process to do whatever management deems necessary in this case. Across the group of newsroom leaders and

peer advisors the justification for not running the stand-up as it is varies, but they are in agreement on the action which should be taken by anyone considering this situation.

The respondents to this simulation share variation in reasoning and justification for their actions with their leaders and peers and they almost share the consensus of what action should be taken. Two men in Indianapolis, a photographer with 20 years of journalism experience and some college coursework, and a reporter with 20 years of journalism experience and a Master's Degree in Journalism, say that the stand-up can be placed in the story and run as it is. The photographer said, "...outside, in public, anyone is open to be photographed." The reporter said, "I would use the stand-up, I think they're fair game." The fifteen other respondents decided that the stand-up could not be used, it would have to be re-shot or eliminated from the final news package.

The resource most accessed by respondents in this study was the additional information. Fifteen of the seventeen journalists who took part in this study looked at the additional information. A photographer from Terre Haute did not access the additional information because he immediately recorded his final decision after recording his initial reaction. A woman in news production from Indianapolis also avoided the additional information as she accessed the ethics code of the RTNDA and then went directly to record her final decision.

The resource least accessed by respondents was the ethics codes of the professional journalism organizations. Only two of the seventeen respondents accessed at least one of the codes from the RTNDA, the NPPA, and the SPJ while dealing with the *AIDS Testing* situation. The woman mentioned above was joined by a female reporter from Terre Haute who looked at the code from the SPJ as well as the code from the RTNDA. A male reporter/anchor from Indianapolis went to the point in the program which made it possible to access the various codes but did not choose to look at any one of the three.

While there was relative disinterest in the established ethical codes it is interesting to note that five respondents, three from Indianapolis and two from Terre Haute, attempted to access a written policy for their station. This location was available in the simulation so that the ethics code established by a participating newsroom could be included. The five of the respondents who

accessed that area in this study discovered that their station was without a formal written policy for conduct or code of ethics.

Overall the respondents in this study averaged 11.5 steps in their decision process. The highest number of steps taken was 35 by a reporter/anchor from Indianapolis. The lowest number of steps was one by a photographer in Terre Haute. The average in Indianapolis was 15 steps and the average in Terre Haute was 8.3. This difference does not prove to be significant statistically and can be partially explained by the fact that there were half as many newsroom leaders available in Terre Haute as there were in Indianapolis. The act of consulting newsroom leaders was figured as a percentage of those available in order to make it possible to compare the access of newsroom leaders across stations.

Across the entire sample the respondents averaged at least one consultation with 55% of the available newsroom leaders. There was no significant difference in this area between the two newsrooms. The range of consultation with newsroom leaders ranged from zero to 100% in both stations. Respondents also averaged at least one consultation with 29% of the available professional peers across the sample. There were three respondents from Indianapolis who consulted all five of the peer advisors. The difference in the level of consultation with peers appears substantial between the two stations, 48% for Indianapolis and 13% for Terre Haute, but a *t*-test indicates that this difference is margina. on a statistical basis ($p<.10$).

Several other variables have contributed to differences in the decision-making process across this sample. The first variable which seemed to exert some influence on the process is gender. The six women in this sample averaged at least one consultation with only seven percent of the peer advisors while men in this sample averaged at least one consultation with 43% of the available peers ($p<.05$). The gender of a respondent did not play a significant role in relation to accessing newsroom leaders. Membership in a journalism organization also appears to be related to the access of information in this sample. Respondents with membership in one of a variety of journalism organizations, including the SPJ, NPPA and local Press Clubs, averaged at least one contact with 72% of available newsroom leaders while non-members averaged contact with 33% of

newsroom leaders ($p<.10$). Organizations members also took more steps in the process than non-members. Organization members averaged 15.2 steps in the simulation and non-members averaged 7.2 ($p<.10$).

Correlations also exist between age, income, journalism experience and contact with peer advisors in this sample. The first three were all positively correlated to peer advisor contact ($p<.05$). Income also showed a positive correlation with steps taken in the simulation ($p<.05$).

Job title might be expected to play a role in the variance of decision processes found in this study but it did not. While 10 of the respondents had some reporting duties, this designation did not alter their decision process compared to the respondents who work in news photography and news production.

A complete change from initial reaction to final decision was only apparent for one respondent, a photographer from Indianapolis. In his initial evaluation of the situation this 53-year-old said the stand-up could stay in the story. He explained, "just because they are in the picture should have no bearing on using the stand-up." But after examining the advice of a single newsroom leader and a single peer advisor he said he would not use the stand-up, "I bow to the judgment of others. We will not use the stand-up." Two other respondents did not change their hypothesized actions but their explanations for their action seem to indicate that their encounters with the available resources had an impact on their thinking. One of the respondents who experienced a modicum of change is the same reporter who plans to keep the stand-up in the story on the basis of "fair game." The other respondent who experienced some change was a reporter/anchor/producer from Terre Haute who confirmed his resolve to eliminate or re-shoot the stand-up by consulting his news director.

Conclusion

This study supports the findings of Gans (1979), Meyer (1983), Parsons and Smith (1988), Steele (1987) and Tuchman (1978). Journalists in this sample use relatively fixed internal cognitive structures to deal with moral ambiguity in daily news work. The intransigence of initial

evaluations indicates that the decision on what do is arrived at quickly and without the benefit of outside input. This becomes disturbingly clear in the case where the individual journalist has decided on a course of action which is clearly against the norm in his newsgathering organization, and most probably in the profession as a whole, and yet remains determined to treat the situation as he has deemed appropriate. What is most surprising is that this photojournalist did not avoid the advice of others, he pursued it. He took 21 steps in his decision process which included consultations with newsroom leadership and professional peers. This case may be the exception and not the rule in this study. The complete dominance of fixed cognitive structures may not be so clear cut.

For fourteen of the respondents in this study consulting resources in the simulation was an exercise in affirmation. The means of reasoning toward the end differed from one advisor to another but they found consensus in what should be done in this situation and indicated that the stand-up should be abandoned if it cannot be re-shot. Each time these fourteen respondents accessed information it supported their view. Why would they change their minds when they are already operating within the guidelines of organization and profession? There is no reason.

Now consider the three men from Indianapolis who initially decided that using the stand-up would be appropriate. One, as discussed above, refused to change his mind in the face of clear opposition. A second did not change his decision to use the stand-up but it is clear that there was movement in his thinking as a result of the information and advice seeking process. This reporter was the most highly educated member of the sample with a Master's Degree in Journalism. He took 22 steps in the decision-making process. And while he did not change his mind about what should be done he was open to the input he received. Explaining his final hypothesized action he said, "I originally made the assumption that they saw our camera. If they did, I stick by the use of the stand-up. But I do think the crew should have made an effort to make them aware of our presence and that we would be shooting." While altruistic ethical reasoning does not appear to play an important role in his thinking, he does try to make it clear to the reader exactly why he has made this decision. Explanation did not seem to be so important in his initial reaction, at that point

he said "I would use the stand-up. These men are in a public place, so there is no legal difficulty. I'm assuming the reporter, photographer, and camera were fairly obvious. If so, and if they made no effort to get out of the way, I think they're fair game."

The final man from Indianapolis who initially decided to use the stand-up was a 53-year-old photographer with 30 years of experience in journalism and a college degree. He took only eight steps in the decision process consulting one newsroom leader and one peer advisor and then he decided to change his mind and abandon the use of the stand-up. The process of seeking outside input altered his understanding of the situation. He felt overwhelmed by the opposition he found in the advice he sought. He said, "I bow to the judgment of others. We will not use the standup. However, more care should have been exercised at the scene and more than one usable standup should have been shot." A true pragmatist this man responded the question, why have you chosen this course of action? with his hands in the air, "Well, when the vote's against you and your position is not all that strong....."

It appears then that explaining all journalistic decision-making as the product of established cognitive structures is premature. There can be some impact from interaction with supervisors, peers, additional information and ethical codes and it is valuable to continue to study this interaction. It is possible that this particular situation--involving the visual identification of men in a news story about AIDS testing--which has strong roots in the popular consciousness, enables journalists to see a course of action quickly. It may be a type of situation which has been given some thought and discussion at home, in the newsroom or in a professional organization. Future research needs to take the nature of the situation into consideration and provide other privacy-based situations for comparison. Future inquiry also needs to look at situations where the hypothesized action might not find consensus among newsroom leaders and peer advisors.

Building the simulation with the Potter Box, it is now useful to analyze the findings with the Potter Box. In the realm of Definition it is obvious that the people in this sample are aware of the importance of obtaining all of the facts before taking an action. Only one woman from each station did not access the additional information which was available. Essentially, for fourteen of

the fifteen other respondents this study the additional information was the first resource they accessed after recording their initial evaluation of what should be done in the situation. This factor in the decision-making process should not be surprising as the primary tasks of journalism are the seeking of facts and the interpretation of data.

Operating in the realm of Definition could have also been a motive for seeking out other resources and advice in the simulation. The overall average of 11.5 steps seems to lend substantial support to the importance of information seeking for the journalists in this sample as they attempted to define the situation for themselves. Analysis also indicates that respondents from Indianapolis spent more time in the information seeking process than the participants from Terre Haute. Indianapolis participants had a higher average number of steps in the process. There was also a positive relationship between income to number of steps in the process. The journalists in Indianapolis made significantly more money on the average--more than 25,000 more dollars a year-- than the journalists in Terre Haute ($p<.05$).

Membership in a journalism organization is another factor which had an effect on the information-seeking process in this sample and potentially plays a role in the Definition realm of the Potter Box. The organization members in this sample doubled the average number of steps of non-members. Perhaps this membership indicates a professional attitude on the part of the journalist and/or a willingness to talk with other journalists about the daily practice of newsgathering. Membership in journalism organizations has been given only limited attention in the journalism ethics literature and needs to be explored more fully in relation to decision making and ethics in journalism (see Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986; Williams, 1993).

The Loyalties realm of the Potter Box, operationalized here primarily in the form of advice from newsroom leaders, appears to be another part of decision making and the Box which is important to the respondents in this study. Overall, respondents accessed an average of 55% of the available newsroom leaders. Membership in a journalism organization proved to be important in this realm as well as the previous. Organization members accessed an average of 72% of the available newsroom leaders while non-members averaged contact with only 33%. While this

difference is significant statistically ($p<.05$), it may be more of a confirmation of the difference in steps taken than an indicator of a particular interest in the ideas expressed by newsroom leaders on the part of journalism organization members because of the previously mentioned difference in the number of steps taken by members and non-members. The act of taking more steps will lead to more contact with newsroom leaders, however the converse may also be true as the desire for more contact with newsroom leaders will lead to more steps. The full nature and direction of this relationship cannot be fully understood from this data and in any case organization membership is a factor which needs more exploration and explanation.

The respondents in this study are apparently not as interested in the Values realm of the Potter Box--operationalized in the form of peer advisors--as they were in the Loyalties realm. Clearly, respondent encounters with newsroom leaders could also involve the attainment of information about values as well as loyalties, but there seems to be a more pragmatic motivation in discovering what the boss thinks than exploring what another journalists half-way across the country thinks. Respondents across the sample averaged contact with only 29% of the available professional peers, but interest in peer input and engagement in the Values realm was significantly different between the two stations. The older, more experienced, better paid, and more secure respondents from Indianapolis averaged contact with 48% of the available peers while the participants from Terre Haute averaged contact with only 13%. This difference could be attributed to a number of factors in this study and they are all speculative. It could be because the younger journalists in Terre Haute are still learning their craft and depend more specifically on newsroom leaders rather than professional peers. Personal observation indicates that the environment in Terre Haute was more learning-oriented than the environment in Indianapolis. The differing level of peer contact could also exist because the younger respondents have not developed a sense of the usefulness of their peers in decision making because their immediate peers are as inexperienced as they are. In any case there is a difference between the two newsrooms which is worth noting and exploring further.

Gender also had an impact on contact with professional peers. There were six women and eleven men in the sample. Three women came from each station, one was a reporter, three were reporter/anchors and two were involved in news production. Two of the five peer advisors were women, one reporter and one photographer. However, these six women averaged contact with only seven percent of the peers while the men averaged contact with 43%. There was no difference in leadership contact on the basis of gender. It would appear that as women are in the minority in this sample, and personal observation indicates that they were in the minority in the two newsrooms, they have not developed a sense of the importance or role of peer interaction. Female peers within the profession may be difficult to find and it may also be the case that when women are working in the same station, or even the same market, they find themselves in a competitive rather than friendly situation. Women may also feel some pressure from male peers to prove their toughness as journalists and gain acceptance as more than window dressing. These are not the types of situations which lead a woman to seek advice from peers. More research in this direction is definitely needed.

The consultation of ethics codes in the Principles realm of the Potter Box is the most startling aspect of this group of journalists working through this simulation. The respondents here must be relying on the principles they have built for themselves internally and the principles they can parse from interaction with leaders and peers because they have little or no interest in the ethics codes of the professional journalism organizations. Within this sample even the members of professional journalism organizations showed no interest in accessing any code of ethics. The two women in the sample who looked at any codes in their decision-making process are not members of any journalism organization.

This finding seems to indicate that the content of the codes of ethics have been internalized by the respondents or that the content is not particularly relevant for dealing with moral ambiguity in daily news work. The internalization idea would be difficult to prove without quizzing the respondents on the content of the codes. The use of deontological reasoning by respondents dealing with *AIDS Testing* might be another way to test for internalization. A deontological means

of ethical reasoning is one where the duty of the individual in a situation is of paramount importance in deciding what to do, the means is more important than the ends. Looking at the reasoning reported by respondents in this study, three journalists--one female anchor/reporter from Terre Haute, one male reporter/anchor from Indianapolis and one male photographer from Indianapolis--give arguments which one might call deontological. These three are concerned about their responsibility as journalists to be fair and to follow the rules agreed upon between the station and people at the testing center. These three are more concerned with their duty to act in a certain way and less concerned with the outcome of their actions. This is some evidence that, at least for these three journalists, the content of the ethics codes have been internalized and there is no need to access a code. None of these three looked at any of the ethics codes.

The lack of code relevance to daily news work, however, seems to be a more compelling interpretation of this data. Wulfemeyer and McFadden (1988) focused on ethical codes in their research and concluded that they are important to journalism. They do not, however, address the relevance of those codes for the practice of journalism. Arthur Kaplan in McCulloch (1984) pointed out that journalists are not comfortable with rules and codes. Kaplan said, "Journalists are more likely to put their moral faith in intuition and gut feelings rather than in the ornate theoretical constructions of moral philosophers or theologians" (McCulloch, 1984, p. 95). Kaplan's observation finds support in this research as there are many indicators of intuition at work. What makes the relevance factor of organizational ethics codes even more cogent is the fact that five respondents searched for localized written policy which does not exist at either of these two stations. None of these five people looked at any of the organizational codes. These people were interested in considering Potter's realm of Principles in their decision-making, but they could not find any which were practically applicable to the situation or their organizational context. If written policies actually existed at these two stations it seems certain that more respondents would have accessed them in order to gain complete information on Loyalties as well as Principles.

Individuals clearly dictate the ways in which they will make decisions when they are faced with moral ambiguity in the newsgathering process. There are also organizational and professional

forces which help to shape their decision-making processes. While this study opens the door for a richer understanding the decision making in journalism and points to several factors which are worthy of further investigation, there are also unspecified factors in the individual, organization, profession and situation which have exercised an influence over the decision-making process and need to be identified. This study has also shown that the Potter Box is useful for analyzing as well as teaching applied ethics. Beyond this study the Potter Box provides a necessary structural foundation for the systematic empirical investigation of journalism ethics. It provides a common ground for data-gathering, analysis and discussion across a broad range of journalism scholars.

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